Palmtop

The journal for today's Psion user

Issue 17 Bimonthly

5 for the 5

Five finance packages for the Series 5

- Halliwell's film guide
- PsiWin 2.1 update
- Colour your 3a/3c
- Infrared connections
- Sketching with the 5
- New cases for the 3 and 5
- Top utilities for the 3a/3c
- PLUS much more...

New lower prices on Series 5!

Competitive Prices

Quick and Friendly Service

Next Day Delivery

Established over 5 Years

Specialist

PSION

Dealer

CLOVE TECHNOLOGY

Bundled deal on Series 5, case and CompactFlash. Call for best price

Phone for our latest newsletter

☎ 01202 302796

Fax 01202 300419

www - http://www.clove-tech.co.uk

43 Springbank Road, Bournemouth BH7 7EL

Email: clovetech@compuserve.com

Palmtop

The journal for today's Psion user

Contacting Palmtop

All requests for subscriptions or back issues and any comments or criticisms regarding the content of *PALMTOP* should be directed to the editor at the following address:

Palmtop Publications
25 Avocet Way
Bicester
Oxon OX6 0YN
ENGLAND

Tel: +44 (0)1869 249287
Fax: +44 (0)1869 246043

E-mail: *palmtop@aol.com*
or: *palmtopmag@compuserve.com*
www: *http://www.palmtop.co.uk/*

Submissions

Any contributions of material published within the pages of *PALMTOP* (excluding 'On The Net') will earn the author a minimum of one free issue added to their subscription. If you wish to write feature articles for the magazine then please contact the editor to discuss your ideas.

Back Issues

All issues are available at £4 each in the UK, £4.50 in Europe, and £5.50 elsewhere. All prices include postage. Just send payment in the usual way, stating which issues you require.

Subscriptions

PALMTOP is available by subscription only from the address given above, price £24 within the UK, £27 in Europe and £33 worldwide. Price covers 6 issues and all postage (and airmail costs for European/worldwide subscriptions). VAT is not payable on *PALMTOP*.

Payment for subscriptions or back issues can be made by cheque or Money Order (payable to *'PALMTOP PUBLICATIONS'*) in UK FUNDS ONLY. Payments can also be made using VISA, MASTERCARD, AMERICAN EXPRESS, EUROCARD, DELTA, JCB, ACCESS and SWITCH cards. Please call, fax, post or e-mail your card details.

General

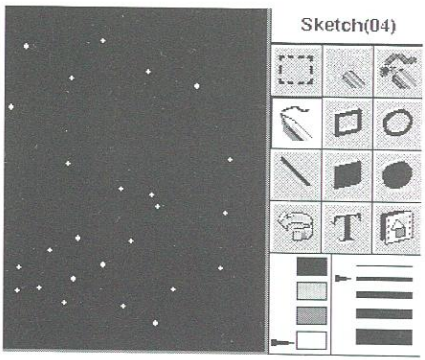
PALMTOP acknowledges that some of the names referred to within the magazine are registered trademarks and are given for information purposes only, with no commercial interests.

Contents

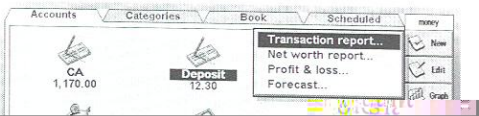
Issue 17
(Volume 3, issue 5)

Modern Art?

Learn how to get some *real* use out of the Series 5 SKETCH application



41



57

4 **Editorial** Tempted by the Dark Side?

6 **Palmtop News** New developments on the Psion front

10 **Shareware Shorts** More shareware for the Series 3a/3c and Series 5

14 **Readers' Letters** Send us your thoughts and win a prize!

18 **A Closer Look** Product reviews—software, hardware, books, cases and more

41 **Modern Art?** Getting to grips with SKETCH on the Series 5

47 **How to be a Bug-Hunter** Don't panic if you find a software bug...

53 **Desert Island Utilities** A look at the best Series 3a/3c utilities

57 **5 for the 5** A head-to-head of all major Series 5 banking programs

67 **The FIVE zone** Chit-chat from the Series 5 world

71 **How to connect your Psion to the Internet** A beginners' guide

75 **The Fox's Den** More news for Geofox One owners

77 **Tech-Topics** Leigh Edwards looks at database programming

81 **Working with SHEET** Part six of the 3a/3c/Siena spreadsheet tutorial

85 **"On The Net"** Pete Sipple singles out the most interesting items of gossip

89 **Competition!** WIN a copy of Purple Software's Navigator

90 **Hints & Tips** More useful productivity boosters, plus Q&A

94 **Murgan's Musings** About easy 3a/3c financial management

97 **The Psion Reference** With our ever-expanding Software Directory

Editorial

For at least five minutes I was almost tempted by the 'other side'.

Astute readers may have noticed from subtle (and occasionally not-so-subtle) clues from time to time that I am not Microsoft's biggest fan. Despite cutting my computing 'teeth' on PCs almost ten years ago and being a Windows user since Windows 386 version 2.11 and a Microsoft Word user since version 1, I have long since abandoned them in favour of the Apple Macintosh. Anyway, to cut an otherwise over-long story short, I've since become the most vehement Macintosh evangelist, and would rather be hung up by my toenails than resort to using a PC for my daily work, including, of course, the production of *Palmtop*.

Familiarity with one type of computer tends to breed contempt for others. I'd be the first to admit that part of my bias towards Macs stems from nothing more than the fact that I'm used to the interface and have thus become more comfortable with it. PC users are the same—it's human nature. We tend to like what we're comfortable and familiar with.

The same is true with Psions, so I was doubly shocked that on opening a Hewlett Packard (Windows CE 2) HP620LX palmtop a month or so back I *almost* fell in love. Shocked because of my undeniable bias towards Psion palmtops, and because of my anti-Windows bias engendered from five years or so steeped in Mac-lore.

I have to say I was tempted. The machine was very big by Series 5 standards, but seemed well constructed. It was the screen that did it though—beautiful full colour (well, 256 colours), clear and bright. Okay, so the batteries only last 4 hours or so, but with a screen like that I could probably learn to live with the battery life. I tried the keyboard—predictably nothing like the Series 5's, but acceptable. I then fired up the web browser. The 620 was very responsive with its 75Mhz processor, at which point I was almost hooked.

Now cut the previous scene to your local High Street computer superstore. You've just been shown a Psion Series 3c and a Series 5 by the less-than-knowledgeable salesperson, who then whips out the HP620.

"Yes, it's 100% compatible with your PC, runs the same software, and look at that lovely colour display. It makes those green screens on the old Psions look a bit sad, doesn't it?"

The rest is all too predictable. You look at the machines side by side, are transfixed by the "mini PC's" colour screen, and you tell the assistant to box up the 620LX for you there and then. All too many computer purchases are like that. You bought the Windows CE machine because it looked reassuringly familiar to the PC on your desk, and because you were wooed by the superior screen.

So what was wrong with the decision? If you had looked beyond the initial attraction (as I said, it took me a good five minutes to do this), you would see that much of the software lacks the functional richness of the Series 5, and even of the Series 3c. That's not to denigrate the 3c by saying 'even', but it *is* a couple of generations older than CE 2, and Microsoft really should have done a better job than that.

Richness? Oh yes—the CE machines still don't allow styles in the word processor, so every time you type a heading you'll have to change the emphasis and font size by hand. Every time. And there are no graphs in 'Pocket Excel'. Oh, and no object embedding of any kind: you can't incorporate a table in your report or a sketch in your diary.

Funny how the extra size and shorter battery life now start to look like real obstacles. And funny how it only took another five minutes to talk myself right back out of the CE machine. I feel safe again.

The trouble is, Psion, that a lot of punters don't get past those first five minutes and so end up making the wrong decision—at least for you. It's not enough to have a better product, and it's not enough to tell people that they don't *need* colour screens or that they don't make you any more productive (which they probably don't).

It's a racing certainty that Psion are working on their own colour screens for the future. The Series 5's EPOC32 operating system has supported full 24-bit colour from the outset, so it's really not a big deal to implement it. By all means keep selling non-colour machines too, but please, please get these colour ones shipping as soon as possible, if not sooner. Remember that consumers are fickle. If not, you may well lose the palmtop supremacy battle for all the wrong reasons.

Steve Clack - April 1998

Palmtop is...

Steve Clack - Publishing Editor

Pete Sipple - Contributing Editor

Steve Litchfield - Contributing Editor

Leigh Edwards - Technical Consultant

Rosemary Rolfe - Distribution Manager

Thanks... to all the contributors whose names appear within the magazine, particularly Stephen Murgan and Rick Andrews for their regular contributions. Thanks also to all those who have kindly supplied their products for evaluation.

Palmtop News

The latest hot gossip on what's happening in the Psion world

Series 5 price cuts

Psion announced price cuts to both 4MB and 8MB Series 5 machines on 16th March. The RRP of the 8MB unit has been cut by £70 to £429.95 (inc. VAT), and the 4MB unit by £40 to £399.95.

Psion slammed for US pricing structure

Psion have recently come under criticism from the UK press for their American pricing structure. Despite the recent fall in UK prices the 8MB Series 5 is available at $495 in the USA, making UK prices almost 25% higher. This has lead to the ridiculous situation whereby it is still cheaper to buy the UK-built product from the USA, even after adding shipping charges, import duty and VAT.

The Office of Fair Trading intends to look further into the matter if it receives complaints from consumers.

Psion announce figures

Psion recently announced preliminary results for 1997, and although turnover was up from £124 million to £142 million, pre-tax profits slipped from £16 million to £11.4 million. Psion have attributed the drop to an increased R&D budget of £10 million and the strength of sterling.

However, Psion noted significant growth of overseas sales, progressing licensing contracts for EPOC32, a leading position in European PC Card (PCMCIA) markets, and strong demand for the Series 5.

Some analysts downgraded Psion stock, believing it to be overvalued, and were worried about comments from Psion

about confusion caused by new Windows CE products coming into the market.

Psiwin 2.1 out...

A major upgrade to the Series 5 PsiWin software, version 2.1, is now available from Psion's web site, or from the latest *Palmtop* CD-ROM. See page 18 for a full product update.

www.psion.com

...and new Message Suite

Version 1.10f of the Series 5 email, faxing and web browsing software, Message Suite, is now available from Psion's web site and from the latest *Palmtop* CD-ROM.

Quicken cancelled

The long-awaited Series 5 Quicken banking package has finally been dropped due to licensing wrangles with Intuit, creators of the PC-based Quicken. The product will be replaced by Palmtop BV's Money package, due for release in May. See page 57 for a full review of Money and other Series 5 personal finance packages.

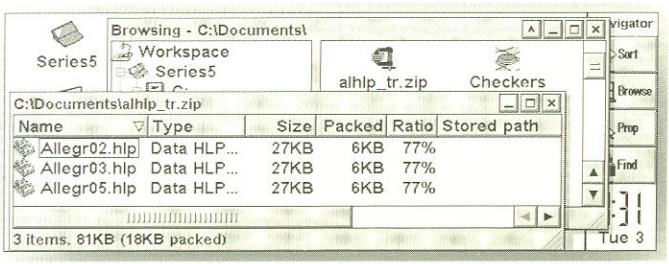
Geofox go retail

Geofox have recently announced that Ucon Limited of 239-240 Tottenham Court Road in London is now selling the Geofox-One. Geofox previously planned to sell the machines solely through its own direct channel.

Ucon Ltd: 0171 636 5242.

Series 5 file manager

Purple Software are about to release a sophisticated new add-on file manager for the Series 5. 'Navigator' will allow



Navigator. Purple Software's new advanced Series 5 file manager

'drag and drop' file manipulation, integrated PKZIP data compression and many other features. The product was not available for evaluation at the time of going to press, but we will be featuring an exhaustive review in the next issue of *Palmtop*.

En Route renamed

For copyright reasons Palmtop BV's *En Route* route planning package has been renamed to *Route Planner* . The newly-named program is identical to the older product.

EasyGSM

Psion's EasyGSM software was previewed at CeBIT in March (see next page) but it is still in development and will not be shipping until the second half of this year.

Palmscape software

April sees the launch of Palmscape, a coalition of Series 5/Geofox One software authors all working together under a single banner. Palmscape intends to offer commercial quality at shareware prices—see page 114 for further details.

Sendit wireless system

Psion Software PLC and Sendit AB have announced a new partnership enabling intelligent proactive wireless messaging on EPOC devices. Psion Software is licensing Sendit's agent protocol which will enable EPOC-based devices, such as Smartphones, Communicators and Mobile Network Computers, to automatically check and receive selected Internet email and content whilst on the move.

EPOC telephones...

Philips Consumer Communications has launched a new Smartphone clip-on, based on Psion Software's EPOC operating system. The lightweight and compact Smartphone add-on, called Synergy™, clips onto the Philips Ilium GSM mobile telephone and allows users to browse the Internet, send and receive emails, faxes and data, and more easily compose messages for the Short Message Service (SMS).

Powered by EPOC, Synergy is also a fully functional organiser which includes EPOC applications such as AGENDA, To-Do lists, clock and calculator. Synergy will be available in Europe in the second quarter of 1998.

CeBIT report

CeBIT, the world's largest computer and IT show in Hannover, Germany, in March, had 7,000 exhibitors demonstrating new products to over 600,000 visitors. As expected, Psion were there. They had one stand for Psion Industrial, showing off the WorkAbout range in action; the other stand was split into a smaller part for Psion Dacom, the modem manufacturing arm, and a bigger one for Psion Computers, showing the Series 3c, Series 5 and Siena.

On show was a pre-release version of EasyGSM, the long awaited 'software modem' for the Series 5. This new development will allow Internet connections via the Message Suite without any physical modem—just by connecting your Series 5 directly to almost any GSM mobile phone. No date was given for the release of EasyGSM, though it should appear sometime in the second half of this year. The software will be supplied on diskette complete with a simple GSM connection cable and manual.

During our conversation with Mr Kaluza, Marketing Communications Manager at Psion Germany, we talked about the Series 5 and competition from Windows CE2. Hewlett Packard, Sharp and Compaq now offer their WinCE machines with colour displays. These machines all run for less than five hours, even with Lithium-Iron batteries, as they must be permanently backlit.

"One day of use is not acceptable for a mobile computer," said Mr Kaluza. Psion is holding off on colour screens at the moment, waiting for 'Reflective Colour Screens' to be produced by Sharp. These HR-TFT displays haven't any backlight—they just reflect the sunlight, which means they'll need only a fraction of the power of conventional TFT displays. Psion *do* plan to release a colour Series 5 once displays become cheap enough and have a sufficiently low energy consumption. EPOC32, the operating system of the Series 5, already supports high resolution colour.

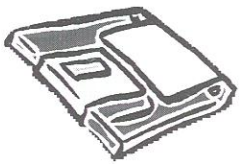
We also talked about the Series 3c and Siena running EPOC16. Psion will continue to support this platform in parallel with the Series 5, and Psion reported that future variants of the Series 3c will become faster and incorporate some new features.

As always, Psion would not give any advance information on the precise nature of any new Psion computers, but you can be sure to read about it in *Palmtop* as new information materializes.

Sebastian Hochstetter

Shareware Shorts

Steve Litchfield takes a look at the latest additions to the world of Psion shareware...

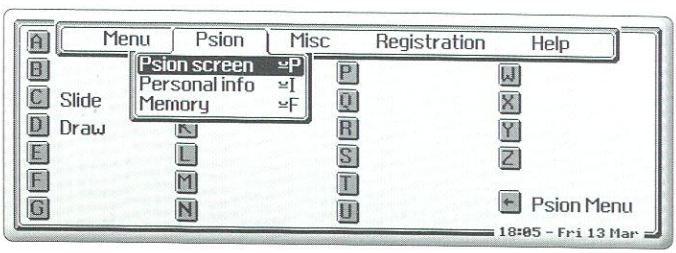


From this issue onwards we'll make Shareware Shorts a little easier to follow by separating items according to the machine types they run on. This makes it easier to go straight to the programs that are relevant to *your* Psion computer.

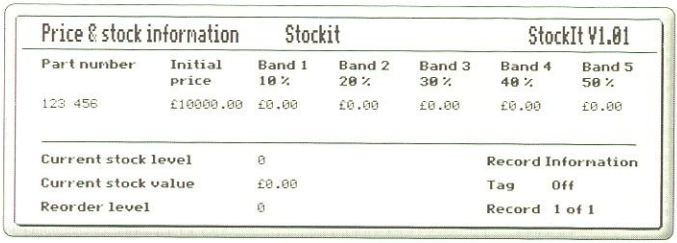
Series 3a/3c

One of the true shareware gems of the last 5 years has been **Andy Clarkson's** *Plan* project planning software, and this has now been upgraded to version 4.3, with chart printing and Microsoft Project 98 support. Also updated since the stop press note in issue 16 is **Jon Read's** *Jumpy Classic*, now at version 2.00F, with smoother gameplay and new sound effects.

Retro games always seem to be popular, and **Darren Prescott's** freeware *Castle Reisling* will meet with approval. It's a character-based RPG (Rôle Playing Game) and includes 24 levels, 11 monsters, 8 different weapons and 8 types of armour. Magic, treasure and battles all feature, as you'd expect. *Castle Reisling* has the potential to keep gamers occupied for hours at a time.



Starting to set up *MenuS3* on a Series 3c



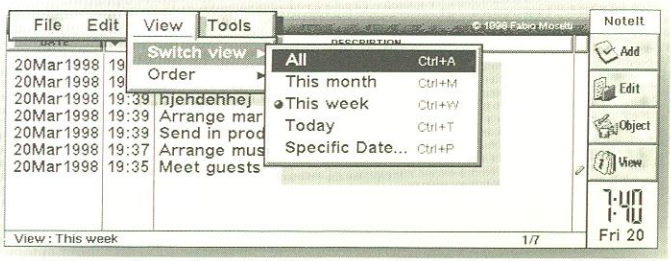
One of the many faces of StockIt

Henri Spagnolos' *MenuS3* is yet another application launcher, available in French and English which allows you to run .app or .opa applications with a single keypress. Extra utilities are included to examine free memory and perform day of the week calculations. It's primitive in places and comes a poor second to the Psion system screen for power users, but beginners may find it a useful aid.

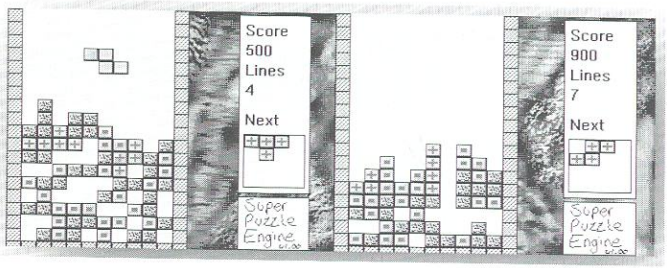
StockIt is a full stock control and product pricing system from **Chris Nicholson**. The main listing screen summarises part numbers in the database, with hotkeys to adjust the stock levels of each. Once details have been entered into the program, extra screens become available to do price and stock value calculations. Reducing stock below the minimum defined levels produces warnings, with the option to launch SHEET with a filled-in re-order form. As items are sold, relevant customer and invoice information can be noted down for later output.

Series 5

Those still hankering after the 3c's Jotter application have yet another utility to sample. **Fabio Mosetti** has programmed *NoteIt*, which allows text or objects to be linked, listed and sorted. **RMR Software**, who did one of the *first* Jotter-clones (*S5Notes*), have announced a Series 5 version of *VacTrac* (Vacation Tracker), the holiday management system. Perfect for the busy manager, it allows you to track who's away and when, and helps to better manage your human resources. RMR have also announced a variety of OPX modules for budding Series 5 OPL/32 programmers to get their teeth into.



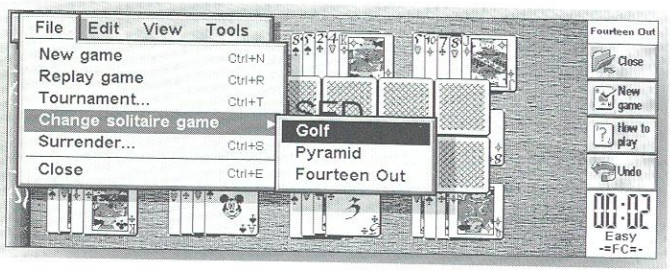
Dated jottings made easy with *NoteIt*



A head-to-head with *Super Puzzle Engine*

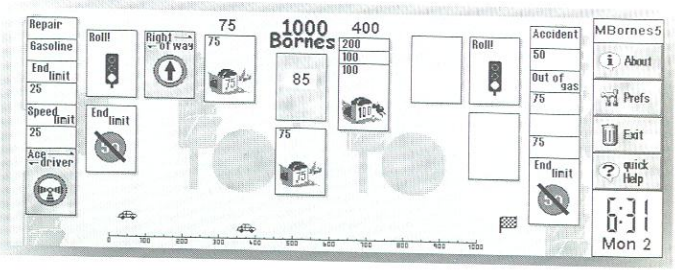
Ad Bosch, the man behind *Contact Edge* and *MyCar*, has addressed one of the design oversights in the Series 5. Take a moment to think how you'd temporarily access your third-party programs if for any reason the touch screen stopped working—no touch-screen means no Extras bar—unless of course you've installed Ad's freeware *XtraLink*. The utility is run once for each third-party application, and creates a special short-cut for each. You can even put the short-cuts in different folders and thus group your applications together according to type.

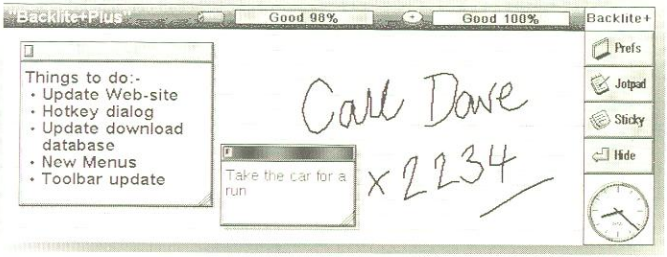
Two freeware game playing systems caught my eye recently. **Stephen Gallagher's** *Super Puzzle Engine* is a 2-player Tetris game with many variations. Even more adaptable is **FatCatz's** *Solitaire Deluxe*, an engine supporting many different types of traditional Solitaire (Patience). Already available are *14-out*, *Golf* and *Pyramid*.



Card solitaires galore—the free *Solitaire Deluxe*

A long way to go in *Milles Bournes*





***Backlight Plus* at work**

Staying with freeware, *Milles Bournes* (French for 1000km) is a refreshingly different card-based strategy game, written by **Fred Botton**. The plot is that you're trying to drive 1000km by placing special distance cards on the playing surface. Meanwhile, your computer opponent is trying to stop you by playing accident cards, breakdown cards and various other sneaky tactics—though of course you're trying to do the same to his car. Great fun and highly recommended.

Utilities that take over the Series 5 interrupt system to give macro control and other functions are becoming quite common. Three of the best are **Jason Kneen's** *BackLite Plus*, which started life as a backlight controller and has grown into a full desktop environment and macro system, **Henry Hirst's** *Hotkeys*, a productivity aid which gives instant access to commonly-used applications, functions and text snippets, and **Pascal Nicolas'** *SwitchTask*, a task switcher which has also developed a very powerful macro system. The first two are shareware and the third freeware, though don't try them all out at the same time as these 'power' utilities don't always get along together!

Stefan Smith and I, long co-authors of the *UK Pocket Directory*, are proud to announce version 2.0, which in addition to 20% more content also launches Stefan's huge STD code database.

A few stop press items: **Andrew Duffield** is on the verge of birthing a genuine CAD (Computer Aided Design) program for the Series 5, with full layer and object support. More on this in the next issue.

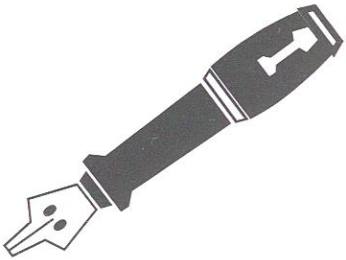
Work on my own Psi-Mapper/GB and Psi-Mapper/France, halted for a year because of other commitments, is about to resume, with plans to revamp the way overlays and town plans are handled for greater speed and convenience.

As usual, all the items mentioned here can be downloaded from the Palmtop web site, and are included on our latest CD-ROM.

Readers' Letters

Contribute and WIN PRIZES!

The Prize Letter in each issue wins the author a FREE software package or other Psion goodies from our special collection. Prizes are valued at up to £70 each!



Long live my 3c

I just *had* to tell you how excited I am with my Psion 3c, which was bought for me five months ago. What's so unusual about someone having a Psion?—well for me it has changed my life. I am disabled, having developed Multiple Sclerosis ten years ago. However being one of those hard headed rams I managed to start my own business with a cosmetic company back in 1994. I soon discovered that I had a talent for teaching skin care and for training others to do the same, and in 1995 I became a director with them. My responsibilities grew and so did the paperwork, so a PC was purchased. This helped back home in the office, but not when I travelled to conferences both overseas and in the UK. So I started to take a tape recorder with me as my hands were not doing what my brain told them, or at least not fast enough to take notes. This method was fraught with problems of poor sound quality and the unenviable task of transferring the tapes to the written word.

Then the little Psion came to the rescue. The built-in alarm ensures that I awaken when away from home and keeps me on time for my business appointments. The database with Purple Software's excellent DataView Pro holds all my personal customers, consultants and private contacts. I have found the world time wonderful as my global headquarters is in Dallas. I can take all the notes I want to by typing with my thumbs and holding the little Psion in my hands—in fact on a recent trip to Florida I was able to take notes all day for four days and then just transfer the files to my PC and print them out on my return! I love this

little life saver. I know the keyboard is small, but it is quite usable. My husband had purchased a Hewlett Packard HP320LX (similar to the Psion 5) that uses a stylus to operate from the screen—guess who couldn't hold on to the stylus, and the weight of the machine made my hands ache in less than five minutes. Does anyone out there know of a good home for a brand new but redundant HP320LX?

So, if you have anything less than worship and admiration for this little miracle then maybe you should look hard at its amazing capabilities, as I do—every day discovering more and more time saving tools without which my business and I would be far less efficient. Thanks, Psion, for this little fellow—not all of us want to go poking around at a screen with a stylus. Long live the Series 3.

Antoinette Khodabandeh
Poole, Dorset

Psion abuse

I am someone who appreciates a little fresh air while using my computer.

Psion's little devices provide just that. They offer the ability to work almost anywhere: on the move, in a car, on a train or aeroplane, out of doors, in your garden, a public park, or outside a café with a fresh filter coffee. Freedom to work is what the palmtop generation is all about. Or is it?

In my experience of using a 3a outside my own dwellings, I appear to have discovered a certain etiquette of where to and where not to 'flip the lid'. Have you ever used *your* Psion in a public park? Many of you may do this regularly. I did too, but have since found other more acceptable places to display my utensil.

When residing in London over the summer months the air quality can be terrible, and occupying a patch of grass in the middle of a park offers some relief to the lungs. It's such a great pity that there is no known relief against moronic technophobes, who unashamedly laugh and hurl abuse at you for using a computer in public. Who are these simpletons? Where do they come from?

Surely the days are over when computer owners are branded as 'nerds'? Men, women and children from all walks of life use computers every day for very legitimate reasons.

One evening, my partner and I walked to the River Thames at Hammersmith, London. She was going rowing and I intended to work with my 3a while sitting at the riverside, enjoying the evening sun as I waited for her to return.

People strolled by endlessly. Young couples arm in arm, older couples and groups of youngsters. Voices could be heard all around: hysterical laughter, general conversation, and males demonstrating their prowess to the opposite sex. A happy, trouble-free scene.

I had no qualms about using my gadget in this environment, and so I quietly began to type. While minding my own business in this way I received no less than *three* separate insults within an hour.

While none appeared to be threatening, I did feel inclined to develop a complex—intimidation is a terrible thing. Consequently, my little friend was switched off and put to bed for the night.

Many times over the past months I've pondered over these events in a vain attempt to discover the cause. I cannot. Why is it socially acceptable to use a computer on a train or in a café but not in a public park? Am I missing the point here, or am I just a pathetically sad individual?

No, I don't believe I am. And I don't believe that I'm alone in my experiences either. However, there is every possibility that I have been unfortunate. Or maybe I'm just sensitive to the issue and should have defended my cause?

Whatever. My investment in Psion's technologies was for liberation, to escape the realms of the indoor world. That is the way it has to be and is going to remain. There are many people who are yet to see the light...

Name and address not supplied

Off to the moon on 64K

After reading Murgan's Musings on the subject of 'Bloatware' in issue 16, I thought to myself "I could have written that". I'm in total agreement.

Just recently, a colleague at work purchased a new computer system. This had an 8.5 Gigabyte hard disk and 128 Megabytes of RAM. That's more RAM memory than my machine has hard disk space. NASA only needed 64K for the first moon landing—do we really need all this power?

That's the reason I purchased a Series 3—at least I won't have to upgrade the software every few months just to keep in line with the latest developments. So, what happens—the people at Psion then bring out the Series 5. But I'm not downhearted, "3c forever" that's my motto. As long as *Palmtop* keeps writing informative 3a/3c articles and some new shareware keeps appearing, why upgrade—it'll do for me?

R Chamberlain
Royston, Hertfordshire

Is Psion serious about beating the competition?

With the appearance of Windows CE2 in the Middle East the future of Psion is highly questionable.

Most of the people buying WinCE machines are fascinated by the idea of carrying around a machine loaded with

Windows, albeit a much cut-down version.

Despite the fact that in functionality the CE2 machines are still behind the Series 5, (apart from their colour displays) they have received much coverage and advertising, impressing non-PC and PC users alike.

Here there's hardly any Psion advertising (in fact I have seen only one advertisement for the Series 5). Even *I* could claim to be more knowledgeable about Psions than our local dealer here in Oman.

Manasseh Makala
Oman

Psion don't seem to have paid adequate attention to advertising in the past, but they are stepping up operations over the next few months with a £1.8 million advertising campaign for the Series 5 in Europe this spring alone, including coverage in several daily newspapers and prominent magazines.

There will be a parallel campaign in the USA, focussing on press review quotes and awards from the American press, received in favour of the Series 5-Ed.

DOS for Psion, anyone?

You may not be aware that there are wailings and gnashings of teeth amongst HP200LX users. Despite the status of this palmtop as the only remaining MS-DOS model and the large and loyal user base (due to its ability to run DOS and therefore the huge quantity of DOS software, flash cards to 100MB etc, etc.), HP are discontinuing it—expecting users to transfer to their inferior CE machines, whose built-in software is nowhere near as good, even neglecting the 200's DOS expansion capabilities.

It would seem therefore that there is an opening for Psion to woo this group, who are of course anti-Windows CE. If only Psion had a DOS emulation there would be no decision to make. But without that we shall have to stick to our 200s until (eventually) CE gets better.

There are a large number of HP200 users throughout the world with specialist suppliers and a magazine like yours. At present it is all there for Psion's taking—if Psion want us (and our money). Meanwhile, I have taken out a subscription to *Palmtop*.

Jeff Cragg
Plymouth, Devon

A Closer Look...

...at some of the newest and most interesting products available for your Series 3a/3c, Series 5 and Siena

PsiWin 2.1

Series 5

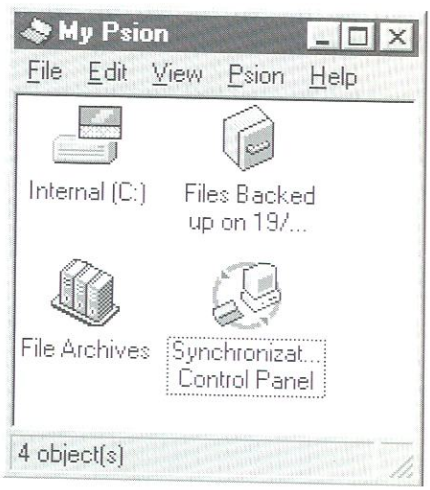
If you bought your Series 5 before the end of March 1998 then your PsiWin package, the software which lets you connect to your PC, is now out-of-date. Version 2.1 not only fixes some bugs from version 2.0 and 2.01, it also adds a few new features.

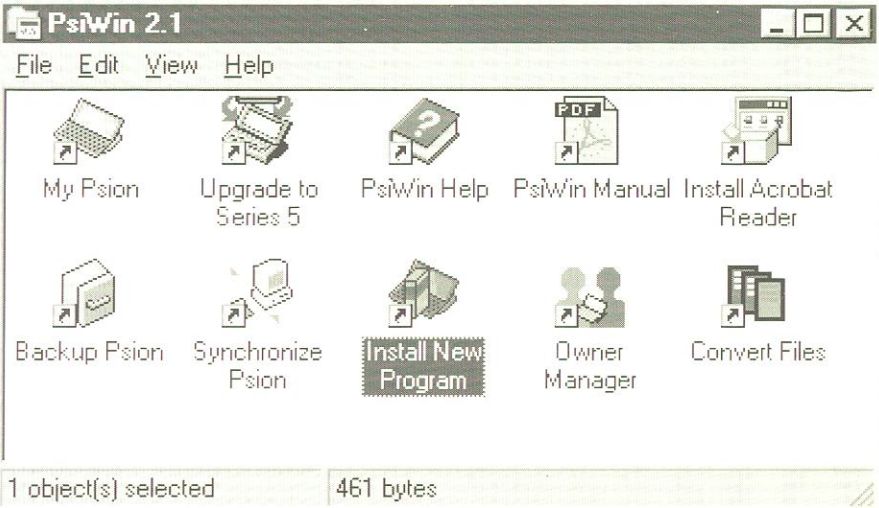
The look and feel of 2.1 are much as before, so rather than going back to basics this review will concentrate on what's new. Those readers who are new to PsiWin might want to look back in issue 13 for the original review.

Installation

Psion recommend that you uninstall PsiWin 2.0 before installing this latest version. This is easily done using Windows 95's 'Add/Remove Programs' utility found in the Control Panel.

Installation is fairly straightforward, and when complete you'll notice a few new icons in the PsiWin folder, including an





PsiWin 2.1, including some new features

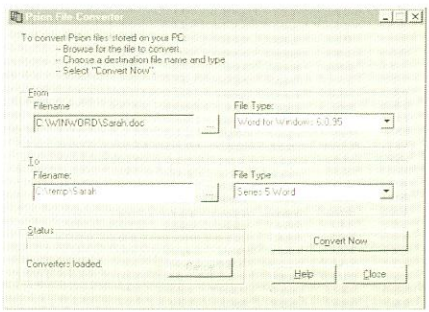
Adobe Acrobat (PDF) version of the manual (together with an Acrobat reader) and 'Owner Manager', which allows you to keep backups and stored settings for multiple users sharing a single PC.

New convertors

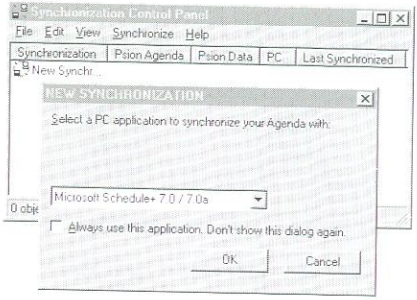
In addition to all the original PsiWin 2.0 file convertors, the following applications are now supported:

- Microsoft Office 97: Word 97 (8.0), Excel 97 (8.0), Outlook 97.
- Lotus: 1-2-3 WK4.
- Corel WordPerfect Suite 8: WordPerfect 8.0, Quattro Pro 8.0.
- Series 5 SOUND files to/from Windows WAV sound files.
- Series 5 SKETCH files to/from Windows BMP graphics.
- Series 5 WORD and SHEET to/from Series 3/3a/3c/Siena WORD and SHEET.

These additional filters fill in a number of gaps left in the earlier versions of PsiWin, and the new SKETCH/BMP file convertor removes the need to use the



File conversion in progress



Staying in synch...

horrible DOS-based BMCONV utility shipped with earlier versions of program. It's now a straightforward matter to take suitably sized graphics from your PC and transfer them for viewing directly on your Series 5.

The ability to convert WORD and SHEET files both to and from the Series 3 range of machines is also a welcome addition, and means that if you have a mixed office of Series 3 and Series 5 users you can freely exchange documents and spreadsheets in both directions.

Synchronisation

An icon now installs itself on the Windows desktop to allow one-click synchronisation for your contact data and diaries. This supports Microsoft Schedule+ 7/7a/7.5 and Outlook 97 as well as Lotus Organiser 2.1, 97 and GS.

The additional synchronisation of your personal contact information in a Series 5 DATA file as well as just your AGENDA is an important addition, but it's worth noting that exchanges between dissimilar data formats are not infallible.

I don't use synchronisation myself, but I know many users who do, and I've heard from a couple who are still unhappy with 2.1's performance in this area. It's been reported as slow and a little inflexible, especially when talking to Outlook, where its handling of the transfer of contact fields is limited. We'll be covering the whole issue of AGENDA synchronisation in more depth in a future issue of *Palmtop*.

Offline conversion

At last it's now possible to convert files to and from Series 5 formats without needing to be connected to your Psion. This conversion is very fast, and for me very useful.

Other improvements

PsiWin 2.1 allows for fully automatic connection, backup and synchronisation and will even switch your Series 5 on if it's turned off when you choose to connect, synchronise or backup, or when you double click on a Psion icon.

Another nice touch is the ability to send any PC file straight to your Psion simply by right-clicking on the filename and selecting 'Send to Psion'.

The final new addition is an option to install programs straight onto your

Series 5. EPOCInstall allows all programs supplied with SIS or CTL control files to be installed automatically, see 'The Installation Game' in issues 14 and 15 for full details of this procedure.

Plug-ins

With PsiWin 2.1 you can extend PsiWin's functionality with a collection of plug-ins. The plug-ins are not supplied as standard, and unlike PsiWin itself they are not free. A list of download points are available at Psion's website. At present, three plug-ins are available:

- **Psion InSync** for Lotus Notes. This synchronises your Lotus Notes calendar and address book with the Series 5, and supports Lotus Notes 4.5 and 4.6.
- **Linkwise** for Novell GroupWise 4.1a, 5.1 and 5.2 Windows clients. This synchronises your GroupWise appointments notes and tasks with the Series 5.
- **Presentation Maker.** Enables you to create presentations with Presentation Maker on your Series 5 and then transfer them directly to Microsoft PowerPoint. The package includes extra PsiWin convertors for PowerPoint 7.0 and 8.0.

According to Psion, PsiWin 2.1 does not work with the Series 3a/3c or Siena, however it ***does*** *appear to work successfully for backing up and file transfers at least. Psion will apparently be offering extra connectivity improvements for Siena/3a/3c users later this year.*

Availability

PsiWin 2.1 is available for download via the Internet from Psion's web site *www.psion.com*, and at over 16MB it's a huge download. It's also available free on Palmtop's CD02 (see page 107 for details).

New English language versions of the machine shipped from April onwards should have the new PsiWin incorporated on the CD that comes with the machine, but users are advised to check to be sure.

Other language variants of PsiWin are due to be released in the coming months, and we will be announcing these as they become available.

Pete Sipple

PsiWin 2.1

From: See above

Availability: now

Contact: www.psion.com

Runs on: Series 5

Supplied on: See above

Price: FREE

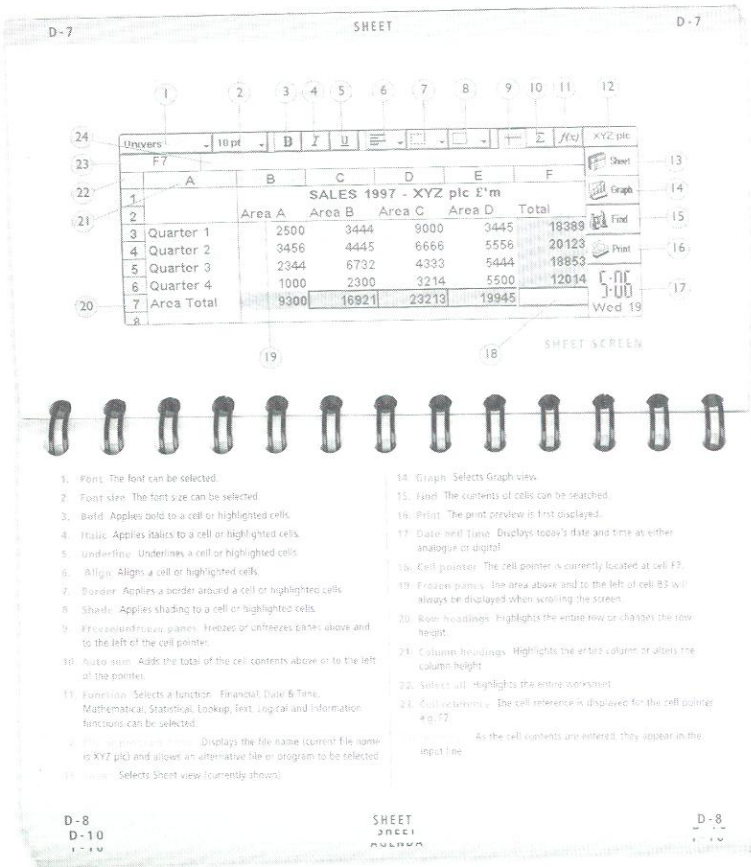
Rating:

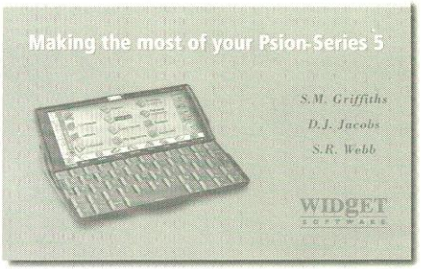
Making the most of your Series 5

Series 5

This small (almost Psion-sized) ring-bound book is the latest in a series of Widget quick reference guides. It is produced in a similar style to the 3c and Siena guides reviewed in issue 14, but with a cheaper cardboard cover. The new book is also held together by a wire loop mechanism rather than the standard six hole loose leaf binding of the previous volumes. This means that you can't take out individual pages to put into your paper organiser for convenient reference, and you can't add pages of your own notes as you could with the other guides.

The book is again produced by Copernicus Training, which confirmed


D-7
SHEET
D-7
SALES 1997 - XYZ plc £'m
Area A Area B Area C Area D Total
Quarter 1 2500 3444 9000 3445 18389
Quarter 2 3456 4445 6666 5556 20123
Quarter 3 2344 6732 4333 5444 18853
Quarter 4 1000 2300 3214 5500 12014
Area Total 9300 16921 23213 19945
Wed 19
SHEET SCREEN
1. Font. The font can be selected.
2. Font size. The font size can be selected.
3. Bold. Applies bold to a cell or highlighted cells.
4. Italic. Applies italics to a cell or highlighted cells.
5. Underline. Underlines a cell or highlighted cells.
6. Align. Aligns a cell or highlighted cells.
7. Border. Applies a border around a cell or highlighted cells.
8. Shade. Applies shading to a cell or highlighted cells.
9. Freeze/unfreeze panes. Freezes or unfreezes panes above and to the left of the cell pointer.
10. Auto sum. Adds the total of the cell contents above or to the left of the pointer.
11. Function. Selects a function. Financial, Date & Time, Mathematical, Statistical, Lookup, Text, Logical and Information functions can be selected.
Displays the file name (current file name is XYZ plc) and allows an alternative file or program to be selected.
Selects Sheet view (currently shown).
14. Graph. Selects Graph view.
15. Find. The contents of cells can be searched.
16. Print. The print preview is first displayed.
17. Date and Time. Displays today's date and time as either analogue or digital.
18. Cell pointer. The cell pointer is currently located at cell F7.
19. Frozen panes. The area above and to the left of cell B3 will always be displayed when scrolling the screen.
20. Row headings. Highlights the entire row or changes the row height.
21. Column headings. Highlights the entire column or alters the column height.
22. Select all. Highlights the entire worksheet.
23. Cell reference. The cell reference is displayed for the cell pointer e.g. F7.
As the cell contents are entered, they appear in the input line.
D-8
D-10
SHEET
D-8



my impression that the text would be appropriate as a companion to a related training course. Given that the (free) official Psion Series 5 user guide is of a similar physical size, I was interested to see what extra value the Widget book could offer to justify the £15 price.

It turns out that not only is the book physically similar to the Psion one, but the chapter sequence and depth of detail are almost identical too. I started to compile a list of differences in coverage and had to give up because there essentially aren't any.

Where 'Making the most...' mainly differs is in the way in which common operations are presented. Whereas the Psion guide largely uses plain English words to direct you (using menu options), the Widget book breaks most things down to sequences of hotkeys. I know from experience that different people think in different ways, and suppose that the hotkey approach will appeal to novices who simply want to know what buttons to press. For long term comprehension, Psion's style is much more useful as it teaches you the terms and keywords to look for, a skill that will pay dividends when trying to accomplish something which isn't covered in the manuals.

There were a few redeeming features. The frequent screen shots are far more imaginatively done and more heavily annotated than Psion's versions, and they work much better. The layout and grammar of the book are very good indeed and there is an excellent letter-number indexing system. I did notice a few small technical errors, but nothing major. Leaving the subject of backups and security to the last few pages of the book seemed a little strange, and it's a shame that Copernicus chose to mimic the Psion chapter sequence so exactly.

'Making the most of your Psion Series 5' was ultimately a disappointment. The title is unfortunate as it implies that it's a book for someone who already knows the basics and wishes to delve deeper. I'd hoped for hints and tips, new ideas and worked examples. In fact the book turned out to be largely a reminder of the features, menu options and hot keys in each application, most of which I either already have or can get for free from simply browsing the menus.

Daniel Madden

Making the most...

From: Widget Software Ltd

Availability: now

Contact: Tel: 01438 815444

Price: £14.95

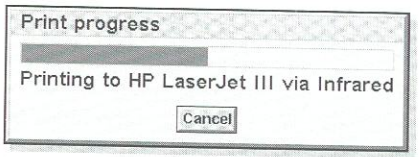
Rating:

ACT-IR100M

Series 3c / Siena / Series 5

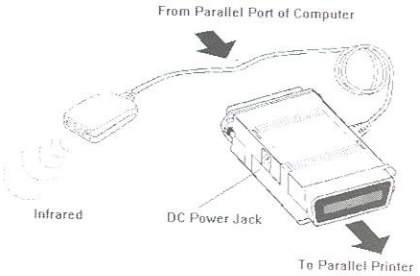
This rather clever little gadget plugs into your printer and enables you to transmit data by 'beaming' from the infrared eye of your Series 3c, Series 5 or Siena without the need to connect the two via a physical cable.

At the heart of the system is a small black box which plugs straight into the back of your printer via the parallel (Centronics) port. From this box runs a cable with an infrared eye within the mouse-like 'pod' on the end. You position the eye in a convenient location, point your Psion at the eye, and print away.



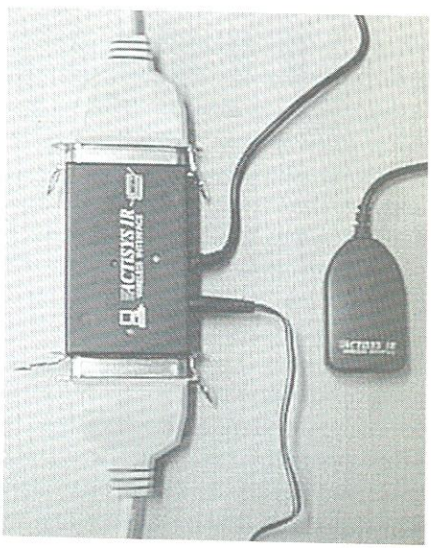
Look—no wires!

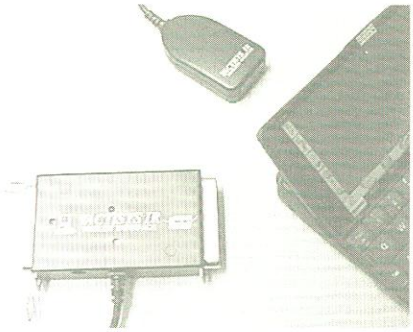
The ACT-IR100M (snappy name) from ACTiSYS also has a second Centronics connection which allows you to connect your PC to the printer too. I tested the unit with a Canon LPBIII laser printer and an HP Deskjet 870 colour inkjet, and with both a Series 5 and a Siena (which needs the free IR drivers available from Psion). Printing from both the Psion and PC worked perfectly every time.



At the Psion end, you must remember to change your printer settings so that it sends the data to infrared as opposed to via the standard parallel port. Also remember that your link settings need changing from 'cable' to 'infrared' (this caught me out briefly).

If used in its full configuration (i.e. if hooked up to both your Psion and your PC), the ACT-IR100M is going to look a little messy, with up to four wires sprouting out of the little box. There's no way around this of course, but as a





colleague pointed out to me whilst writing this review, there are an awful lot of wires needed to achieve wireless printing:

- The lead from your PC to the unit.
- The unit needs power, so has to be connected to the mains via the supplied 7.5 volt AC adaptor.
- If it's not practical to have the ACT-IR100M connected directly to the rear of your printer, the manufacturers have also supplied a Centronics extension lead.
- The 1.1 metre lead which runs off to the 'eye'.

The unit has three status LEDs, one for DC power, and one each for the PC and IR printer connections. The latter two LEDs have patterns for 'Ready', 'Receiving' and 'Buffer full'. For the technically-minded, the ACT-IR100M works at speeds up to 115.2kbps, uses CRC error checking and consumes 0.3W during printing. The main box measures 100mm x 60mm x 20 mm and weighs 205 grammes.

The package comes with a small 14-page manual and a floppy disk containing Microsoft's IR drivers, which you will only need if you have an IR-compatible laptop that you want to use with the unit.

All in all, this is an impressive product, which does the job and does it well. I was able to get a successful print every time I tried, and achieve sensible distances up to around a metre. I have to say that the price shocked me a little, but I suppose that although it's a small box it *is* doing a lot of work. If IR printing is what you need to do, then you should certainly consider the ACT-IR100M, as this solution may work out cheaper than replacing your old printer in favour of an IR-capable machine.

Pete Sipple

ACT-IR100M

From: Widget Software Ltd

Availability: now

Contact: Tel: 01438 815444

Price: £129.95 inc. VAT

Rating:

RhinoPak

Series 3 / 3a / 3c / Series 5

The name conjures up an indestructible accessory made from rhino skin, with enough storage capacity to satisfy the most long-term jungle adventurer. Not far from the truth, in fact, though the material is actually Cordura, the toughened nylon-like material. One of the review samples was finished in matt black and the other in khaki green. They had been hand-machined to a fairly high standard with just the occasional slightly ragged stitch ends.

Your Psion is held in place inside the 'Pak' by four diagonally mounted elastic straps, which are just a little fiddly to engage, but keep the computer securely in place. There are two AA battery slots along the inside edge of the case, plus an elasticated pen holder on the opposite side and a similar mesh pocket for scraps of paper or other small objects.

The outside front of the case has another deep mesh pocket, closed by a large flap and secured with a very strong plastic clasp. This pocket is ideal for papers, pens, credit cards and even SSDs or CF disks. The closure flap itself

is hollow with a zippered top. This is the place to store your loose change, paper clips and other tiny objects that would otherwise creep out of the non-zippered pockets.

The side of the case has a large nylon loop which you can put four fingers through in order to grasp the case more securely, and there is also a simple belt loop across the back if you want to hang the RhinoPak around your waist. There are several other small loops and appendages around the outside of the case, but these appear to be mostly for decoration rather than any practical purpose I could see.

Over-binding of the internal seams means that the RhinoPak should be quite strong and durable. Impressively, my review sample managed to swallow up a Series 3 or 5, passport and plane tickets, spare batteries, pens, CF cards and a small pile of loose change without breaking sweat. It's not the most compact case in the world though,

reaching about 20cm x 12cm x 8cm when loaded.

The RhinoPaks are certainly not the first choice for a *compact* case, nor as something to carry in a businessperson's briefcase. On the other hand, if you want to keep your Psion around your waist on mountain hikes, in your rucksack while trekking the Andes or if you just prefer the more casual appearance of these intrepid-looking cases over the more conventional leather offerings then the chunky RhinoPak may be just what you need.

Non-US readers should note that the RhinoPak is currently available solely from the manufacturer in the USA, so be prepared to pay shipping costs plus VAT and duty on top of the basic price.

Steve Litchfield

RhinoPak

From: Rhinoskin (based in USA)

Availability: now

Contact: Fax: +1 307 734 8868
email: info@rhinoskin.com
web: www.rhinoskin.com

Price: $49.95 + tax (see above)

Rating:

Covertec cases

Series 3 / 3a / 3c / Series 5

Very different from the RhinoPak featured on the previous two pages, these new style leather cases from Covertec are perhaps for the more 'conventional' user. Although perfectly durable when tucked inside a rucksack, these cases are visually more at home in a briefcase or (large) handbag, or being clutched by a smart executive.

The overall style and bulk is reminiscent of the superb Vega cases (reviewed in issue 8), being made from exceptionally thick leather (in some models trimmed with fabrics), and thus offering an unusual degree of protection.

The four sample cases we reviewed were all of identical design, but in styles to cater for a wide range of tastes. One was in a dark chocolate-brown smooth leather throughout, another in a textured mid-brown leather, another in tan leather and buff coloured nylon-like fabric, and the fourth in green Cordura trimmed with brown leather on the outside, and a mix of brown leather and Cordura on the inside.

The leather used here is much more soft and supple than the hard hide used by Vega. Which type you prefer is purely a matter of personal taste, but the pedigree of the Covertec cases is beyond reproach. From the thick padded leather to the strong embossed stud fasteners and the near-perfect heavy stitching these cases exude quality and durability.

The heavy-duty stitching has been made into a major decorative feature, and contrasts attractively with the body of each case. I really couldn't find fault with any aspect of the construction, and they're durable enough to outlive the very machines they are designed to carry by many years. To back this up the cases are covered by a lifetime warranty.

In terms of storage space these aren't as capacious as the RhinoPak, but will comfortably hold your Series 3a/3c or Series 5 plus a pair of AA batteries or a pen, and have internal pockets for four credit cards, a few business cards, papers and banknotes. As a small aside, if you use *any* case to store credit cards then be sure the loudspeaker is facing towards the other side of the case, as the permanent magnet inside can erase the magnetic strip if it gets too close!

Just like the RhinoPak, these are bulky affairs, at around 18.5cm x 10.5cm x 4.5cm. Don't expect to slip one into a jacket pocket—no matter how big your pockets are. They are designed to be carried in the hand or a bag/briefcase, and have no external carrying straps, handles or belt loops.

If you want a case that keeps your computer as compact as possible then forget the Covertecs, but if you want your Psion case to double up as a stylish fashion accessory that offers a useful degree of protection against knocks and drops then these are ideal.

Prices have not been finalised at the time of going to press, but are expected to start at around £29 including VAT. They're certainly not cheap, but considering the outstanding quality they do represent good value for money, and just like the Vega cases they make an ideal gift.

Steve Clack

Covertec cases

From: Exportech

Availability: May/June 1998

Contact: See page 108/109

Price: £TBA

Rating:

3a/3c custom colour shells

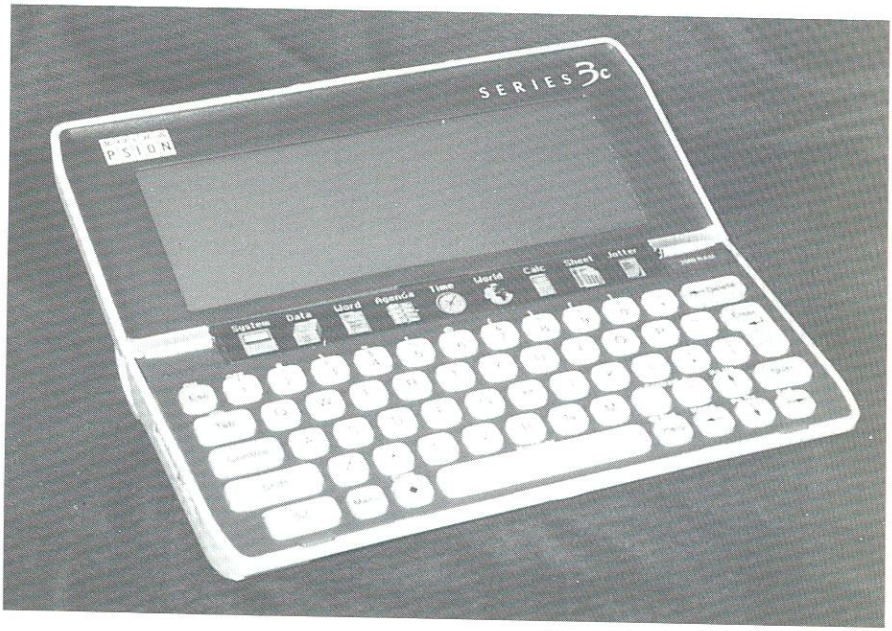
Series 3a / 3c

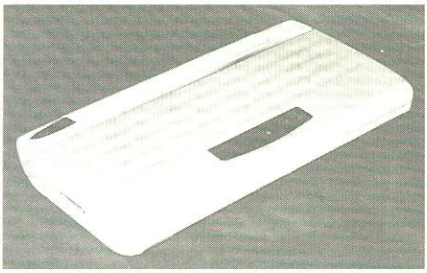
Are you tired of your plain old grey Series 3a or 3c? There used to be another option in the shape of Psion's own 'limited edition' wood effect 3a, but being 'limited' they're no longer available.

For some months now Widget Software have been offering a range of colour 'shell' replacements for the 3a, and they have recently added three for the Series 3c too. The 3a shell range used to comprise a number of wood effects, grey and silver two-tone, psychedelic swirls and even blue denim, but now the 3a is no longer available this has sadly been reduced to just the denim effect model. This is particularly novel, and makes your Psion look just like part of a pair of faded jeans, complete with seams and stitching.

Three shell styles are currently available for the Series 3c: Walnut (a handsome burr finish), matt chrome (see photos), and carbon fibre, which is really a gloss charcoal grey with tiny rectangular silver 'dots' all over it.

I have to confess that I wasn't a big fan of the original wood-effect Psions, but it's important to note that on these models the brown colouring was moulded into the plastic, whereas with the Widget ones it is simply a sprayed-on layer of paint. I found the paint





I've got a silver machine...

quality a little variable between samples, and although the finish on some appeared almost perfect, others showed slight unevenness in both finish and colour. As with the original Psion wood-effect case, the inside keyboard and screen surrounds are left in the original dark grey finish, so don't expect to see the whole machine transformed—just the *outside*.

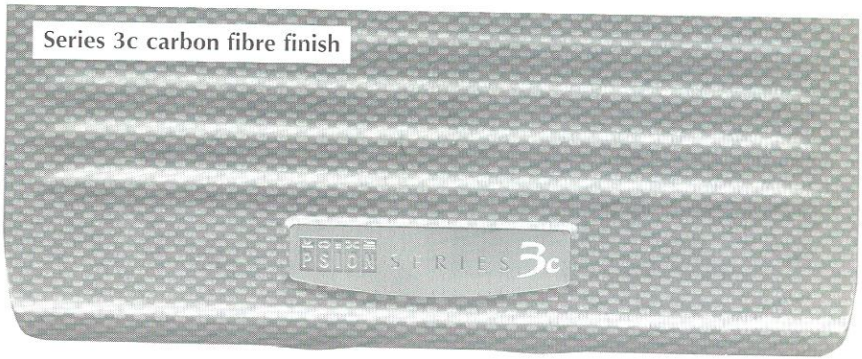
Jean machine...

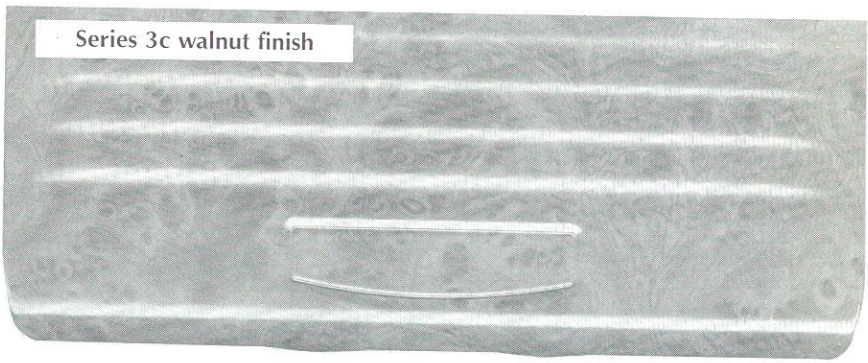
The use of paint also brings up the question of durability. The beautiful chrome silver case I fitted to my Series 3c looked great for the first week or so, but since then has shown a few blemishes where repeated use, opening and closing of the hinges and insertion into my leather slip case has rubbed off tiny patches of paint. For anyone who treats their Psion with exceptional care this shouldn't be a major problem, but for those who use their machine more roughly this could result in a very dog-eared looking computer after only a few months.

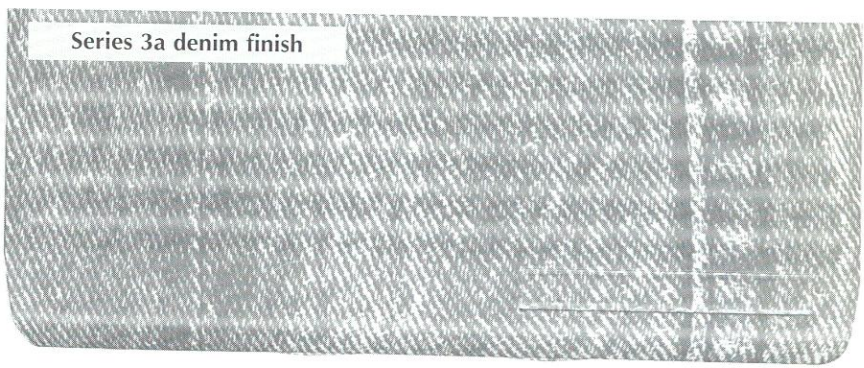
Once you have chosen the desired finish and purchased your colour 'shell', the next question is how to fit it. The shells all come with a single sheet of paper listing the 50-60 steps required to remove the old casing and re-fit the new one, but these instructions are terse to say the least.

For those who don't feel confident to fit the casing themselves, Widget suggest that you use one of their 'Authorised repair centres' in the UK or Canada. The UK service centre is Pinnock Organiser Services in London (see page 115), who will perform the necessary work for £25 including return postage. Anyone not in either the UK or Canada will have to do the job themselves, or have their machine and replacement case shipped to one of the centres for fitting.

Throwing caution to the wind I decided to fit a case to my own Series 3c. The instructions state that the job requires nothing more than a cross-head jeweller's screwdriver, a small flat-head screwdriver, a pair of pliers and a blade. It also warns that replacing the case will invalidate your warranty, though my







machine was way out of its 12 month warranty period anyway, so I wasn't dissuaded.

The big limitations of the documentation are its lack of detailed explanations and the total absence of illustrations. It's all very well to read the simple instruc-

tion "Use screwdriver and press in 4 lugs on hinge edge to unclip screen", but how hard should you press before the lugs should release, and at what point will they simply break off?

Anyone can read a set of instructions, but it's the subtleties like how hard to press when pulling components apart and the fact that you should take particular care of certain delicate components that can cause trouble. These finer points only become evident when you've either done the job half a dozen times or have broken something in your first attempt, by which time it's too late. For these reasons I'd urge all but the most insistent DIY fans to have the case exchange done by an authorised dealer.

I *did* manage to complete the operation successfully myself within about an hour, but not without a couple of heart-stopping moments (as when trying to prise the screen assembly apart without breaking it, or trying to remember which way around the hinge springs were supposed to go). The only real problem was that I must have allowed a small piece of fluff to get trapped behind the screen while I had the machine apart, so now I can see a little darkened blob on it every time I switch the backlight on. Again, the trained engineer would know to take precautions against this, but I'm not about to risk breaking something by attempting to dismantle the whole thing and reassemble it again. I was sufficiently unnerved by my first attempt that I'd never voluntarily try the DIY approach again—just in case.

Despite my experience I'm reluctant to criticise Widget for their too-brief instructions, as they're probably just trying to discourage people from doing it themselves, lest they cause damage as I almost did. At a total price of around £75 including the professional fitting these cases certainly aren't a bargain, but I believe the price is within reasonable limits.

For most people these cases are an irrelevance. They don't add any useful features to your Psion and could certainly be dismissed as a waste of money. Despite my own skepticism before performing the change (which I only did for the sake of this review), I have to confess that my 3c *does* look good with its shiny silver case, and unless the paint starts to look really shabby I wouldn't go back to the original grey.

If you are someone who likes to add a personal touch to your possessions then you may find this kind of thing irresistible—just remember to treat the painted finish with care.

Steve Clack

Replacement shells

From: Widget Software Ltd

Availability: now

Contact: Tel: 01438 815444

Price: £49.95 inc. VAT

Rating:

Halliwell's Film and Video Guide

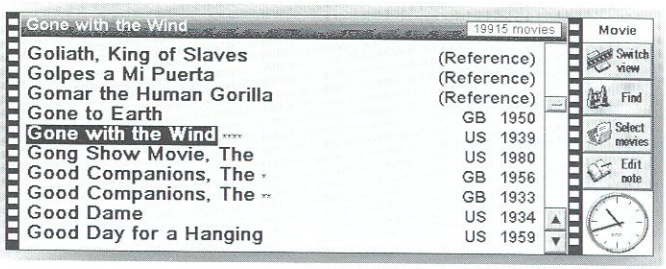
Series 5

I don't consider myself to be a film buff, but over the years I've accumulated three or four film guides, mostly to help me to decide whether a late night movie is worth losing sleep for. A couple of years back I moved over to a CD-ROM version of a guide, which added the option to search and view pictures or sample clips. When I first heard about a Series 5 Film and Video Guide from Palmtop BV (makers of En Route), I had my doubts.

The idea of a fully searchable and comprehensive film guide on a Psion sounds great, but my hopes were high the last time I was presented with an electronic guide to review, and I ended up disappointed. Although squeezing a huge volume of information into a small Psion is no mean feat in itself, I half expected to find omissions, two-word descriptions and some major gaps—I was wrong.

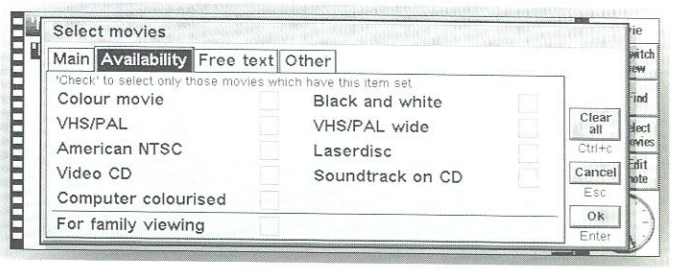
'Film and Video Guide' is an impressive program. Not only is it easy to use, but it's pretty comprehensive, very fast, and packed with information.

The copyright screen indicates 'Harper Collins Publications' as the source of the data, and the quality of that information is pretty good. As well as everything you'd expect to find, i.e. a cast list, year of release and director for each entry, there are plot descriptions, critical comments and facts about the film's making. Halliwell's is full of interesting snippets like that the ending of *The Long*

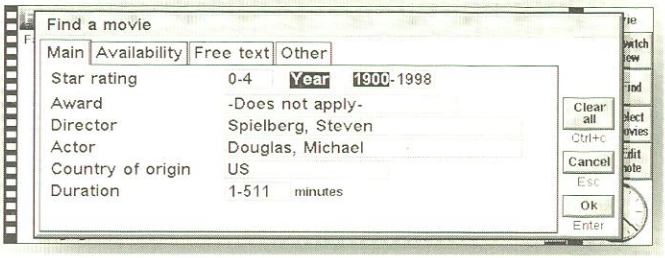


Browsing the full Film list

Selecting film attributes...



Searching for a film—masses of options...



Kiss Goodnight was re-shot as preview audiences didn't like the original ending, and that *Independence Day* grossed $746 worldwide.

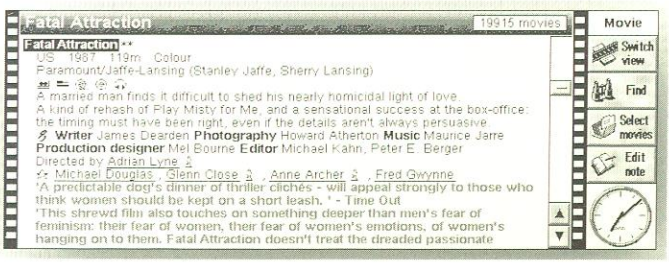
Other information includes the 'publicity tags' (the text used in the promotion of the movie), music/photography/art directors, available formats, and soundtrack information.

One of the best features has to be the critical comments. These are from sources such as Variety magazine, New Yorker, Entertainment Weekly, The Guardian and Observer. There are a very balanced mix of appraisals, from "The elevated downer of the decade" (for *Schindler's List*), to "Yabba Dabba Don't" and "Yabba Dabba Dud" (for *The Flintstones*).

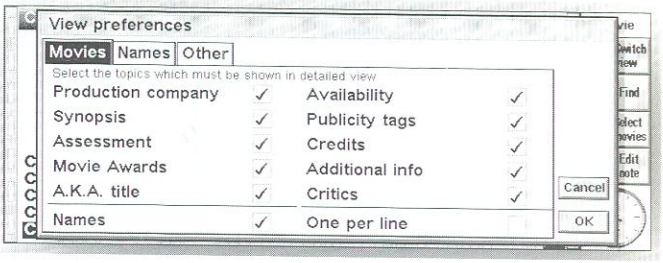
If you know the name of the film you're looking for, searching's easy. From the master film list just start typing the title and you're there—the match-as-you-type feature brings up a list of all the film names that begin with the text string you have entered. If you don't know the name of the film or you want to browse a particular category, the search screens present a whole host of options.

By using 'Select movies' rather than the simple 'Find' option you can view a list of all the films that match your search criteria, and jump straight to any one from there.

You can also customise the film details to exclude any information that doesn't interest you, such as a film's format, synopsis, availability and so on.


Fatal Attraction
19915 movies
Movie
Fatal Attraction **
US 1987 119m Colour
Paramount/Jaffe-Lansing (Stanley Jaffe, Sherry Lansing)
A married man finds it difficult to shed his nearly homicidal light of love.
A kind of rehash of Play Misty for Me, and a sensational success at the box-office: the timing must have been right, even if the details aren't always persuasive.
Writer James Dearden Photography Howard Atherton Music Maurice Jarre
Production designer Mel Bourne Editor Michael Kahn, Peter E. Berger
Directed by Adrian Lyne
Michael Douglas , Glenn Close , Anne Archer , Fred Gwynne
'A predictable dogi's dinner of thriller clichés - will appeal strongly to those who think women should be kept on a short leash.' - Time Out
'This shrewd film also touches on something deeper than men's fear of feminism: their fear of women, their fear of women's emotions, of women's hanging on to them. Fatal Attraction doesn't treat the dreaded passionate
Switch view
Find
Select movies
Edit note

Full details of a selected film. Amazingly comprehensive considering there are almost 20,000 of them!



Customising a view

From the film detail view the names of a film's director and the main cast all appear as hotlinks, and at the tap of a pen you are moved to the 'Names' view. There are no biographies of the cast here, but a full 'filmography' of the titles they are associated with. Great for those "What else was she in?", or "Didn't he do..." questions. You can jump back to the names view at any time with a quick press of the <Tab> key, and use the same match-as-you-type interface as when selecting film titles.

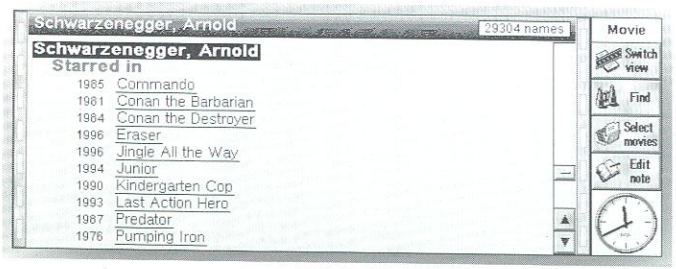
You can also add your own notes and comments to both the actor and film entries, and mark viewed films as 'seen'.

All in all there's a lot of information here. An impressive 19,915 films are listed and the 'names' database contains 29,304 people. This compares to Microsoft Cinemania 97's 20,671 films and 10,609 people. This is quite a feat considering that Cinemania runs on a full-sized PC and comes on CD-ROM.

The only negative point is that the guide does not include films more recent than around mid-1997, and as yet there has been no word from Palmtop BV regarding updates. There is an 'Open file' option on one of the menus, so it may be possible to use additional data files if they are made available.

You should be aware that this is not a small product. It weighs in at over 4 megabytes, and most users will therefore have to install this to a Compact Flash.

It would have been nice for the authors to have included the option to exclude certain types of film during installation, though technically this may not have



Looking up a name

Add notes to either a film or a person...

And directors too...

been possible. Not all types of film are of interest to everyone: by not installing, for example, westerns, war, horror and musicals I may have been able to keep a copy of the guide in my internal memory.

I like this product a lot. Film buffs may find some of the descriptions a little terse, but for me they were spot-on, and anyway, if you're serious about your films you'll probably want to complement the guide with a larger paper version.

The only puzzling omission is the lack of any film classification. Just about any other guide I could find would tell whether each film was U, PG, 15 or 18, but not this one, though in fairness the classification system itself differs from country to country.

The lack of titles released after mid-1997 is an annoyance, but otherwise Halliwell's Film and Video Guide is accurate, concise, and highly recommended!

Pete Sipple

Halliwell's Guide

From: All major Psion dealers

Availability: April 1998

Contact: n/a

Runs on: Series 5/Geofox One

Supplied on: CD-ROM

Price: TBA

Rating:

Timebase 7

Series 5

If you either have to fill out a time sheet or are self-employed, you'll know how important it can be to know exactly how long you've spent on particular jobs. The traditional way of logging this information is to fill out daily sheets and then summarise at the end of the week in a report, but as a Psion owner you of course have the possibility of making it all more efficient.

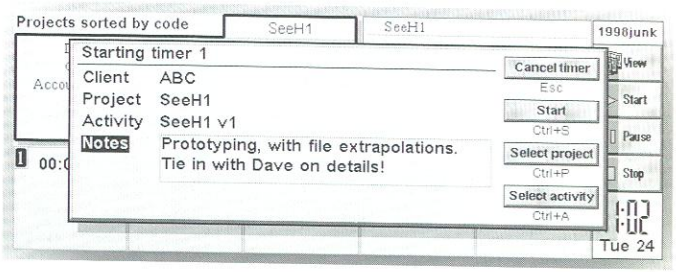
Widget Software's Timebase is designed for just such a time-logging requirement and features five independent timers, each of which can be assigned to a different task for a different client. Mind you, if you can cope with performing five activities which need to be timed simultaneously, you're clearly pretty busy!

At its heart the program has three central databases: one each for clients, projects and activities. For example you might be 'Debugging v1.1 of program X' as part of a 'X suite 98' project for a client called 'MicroX Ltd.' At least one entry needs to be in place for each database before you're allowed to start timing anything for real. This can be slightly confusing for new users, as by default they are started up in 'Report' view, from which none of the three databases can be added to.

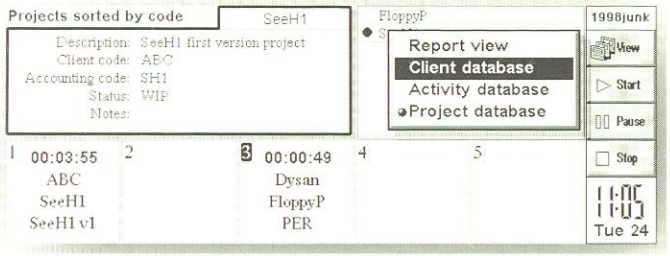
Things progress more smoothly once project and client information has been entered, with a simple tap of the pen starting, pausing and stopping any of the timers. Activity information for any timer can be easily edited, even while timing continues for that activity in the background.

An area where Timebase really excels is in its reporting options. With an activity tagging facility and date, type, project and client filters, it's possible to set up activity reports exactly as you like them and then save the combination of filters for later reuse. Report layouts are previewed on screen and then printed in the same format, a system which works very well indeed.

Although functional on the whole, I experienced several frustrations in this early version (v7.03) which I can imagine the developers being able to solve fairly quickly. For example, the



Setting up an activity timer



Taking control of your time with *Timebase*

Help system crashes if you invoke it more than once, many of the 'Description' fields have a terribly low 16-character limit and some of the help topics seemed incomplete (with some menu options not mentioned at all and some topics truncated artificially). The interface wasn't perfect either, with the Escape key and 'Cancel' not always doing the same jobs, and with limited pen support on the main screens.

In fairness, Widget also deserve credit for the speedy way in which they tracked down and fixed the one show-stopping bug I found. Timebase is the first of their products to only be sold electronically (with the 3-client, 3-project demo version being 'unlocked' by credit card over the phone) and its highly 'online' nature should at least guarantee a good level of email support.

Although this is the first version for the Series 5, Timebase has a long heritage on the Series 3 and can import the latter's data files (good news for upgraders). In fact, importing and exporting of information in general is very good, whether to or from native Timebase or delimited text files.

Those of us wishing to reclaim travel (and other) expenses will wholeheartedly welcome the inclusion of integrated modules for both general expenses and business mileage. The monies from both can be included on the report for the relevant client/project.

Three levels of zoom (though all quite small) and the expected 'Find' facility complete a capable, if unspectacular, application. I wish Widget's new online software ethos well and hope that the instant nature of the Internet will lead to the improvements that might turn Timebase into something more outstanding.

Steve Litchfield

Timebase 7

From: Widget Software Ltd

Availability: www.widget.co.uk

Contact: Tel: 01438 815444

Runs on: Series 5/Geofox One

Supplied on: for download only

Price: £49.95 including VAT

Rating:

FOR SALE

3a 1MB (UK English), with 4MB SSD, PC Card adaptor, 3FAX, Cyclone Floppy Disk, 3Link - serial and parallel, AC Adaptor. Also PsiWin on Floppy disk, DataView Pro on SSD, PsiMail Internet on floppy, Notepad Deluxe on SSD, 3BASE on floppy disk, En Route on SSD, Toolkit 1 on SSD, Toolkit 2 on SSD. £350 for everything.

Contact: Steven Butterworth
Tel: +41 41 7904194 (Switzerland)
Fax +41 41 7904172
Email: buttersoft@bluewin.ch

Series 5 (4MB) with extra pre-loaded games included. Excellent condition and boxed with manuals - £400, or £420 with case.

Contact: Rick Jones
Tel: 0973 845351

Acorn Pocketbook A-Link and Pocket FS2 software - £38, Psion Series 3 games 2 SSD - £18, Acorn spell SSD - £15, Acorn Schedule (diary) SSD - £10. All with original packing and manuals.

Contact: Paul Mayell
Tel: +49 2225 5413 (Germany) after 5pm

Autoroute Express - £27, PsiFax on SSD - £20, Berlitz Phrasebook - £20, Series 3a OPL programming manual - £3. Alternatively, everything for £50 plus £3 p&p. All in good condition with manuals.

Contact: John Wallis - 0171 890 4075 (weekdays, 9am-5pm only)
email: Jwallis@Psionworld.net

Paint and Compose - £5, Text Assistant - £20, Personal Accounts & Expenses - £10, 2MB Flash SSD - £70, 4MB Flash SSD - £120, Cyclone drive with mains adaptor - £70, top quality leather case (cost £45) - £10.

Contact: Jim - 0171 2780361

Series 3c PsiFax on SSD, complete with manual - £20.

Contact: John Wallis
Tel: 0171 890 4075 (weekdays 9am-5pm only)
email: Jwallis@Psionworld.net

Series 3c 2MB (no backlight, less than a year old), boxed including zipper case - £130, PsiWin 1.1 - £20, AutoRoute (boxed) - £20, Psion Money (boxed) - £20, S3 Spell Checker - £10, 128k flash disk - £15, mains adaptor - £5, desk stand - £5. All complete with manuals. Alternatively, everything for £200.

Contact: David Sabine
Tel: 01256 462349 (evenings and weekends)
email: dsabine@zoo.co.uk

Series 3a (512K) with user manual, programming manual, 2 x 512K flash SSDs, leather case, games pack, Series 3 Link cable with manual and software. All in perfect condition - £200 the lot.

Contact: Jane Duff
Tel and fax: 01242 239129

Modern Art?

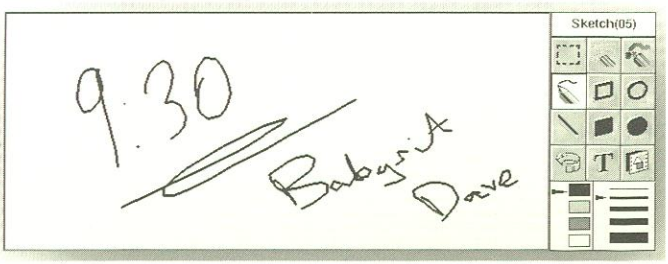
There's more to SKETCH than you might think. We show you how to make the most of this Series 5 application

by Steve Litchfield

At the Series 5 launch, many people wrote off SKETCH as a mere novelty item, perhaps useful only for showing off to your friends or adding simple clip art to embellish your AGENDA files. If this was your view as well then I encourage you to take a second look with me, as SKETCH is a capable tool in the right hands.

As with all software projects, the first thing to establish is what use the end product is going to be. Yes, SKETCH can be used to put clip art into WORD, AGENDA and DATA files just for the hell of it. But you might also use it for:

- Designing your own icons or program bitmaps.
- Designing letterheads or logos for inclusion in your business letters.
- Touching up scanned photos (though you're limited to SKETCH's palette of four greyscales).



Scribbling a quick note

- Scribbling quick pen notes or diagrams (<Fn><SKETCH> will launch a new ready-blanked SKETCH file from anywhere on the Series 5).
- Painting for fun!

Keep it clean

Before we go into any depth, please make sure you keep your Series 5's screen clean and clear of dust as far as possible. Remember that it only takes one tiny piece of grit trapped between pen and screen to scratch it forever. It's also worth considering using Widget's DuoPen, whose weight and 'feel' make drawing on the Psion screen more natural (see page 68).

DO try this at home

As an example, we're going to design a space-age banner for inserting at the top of a letterhead.

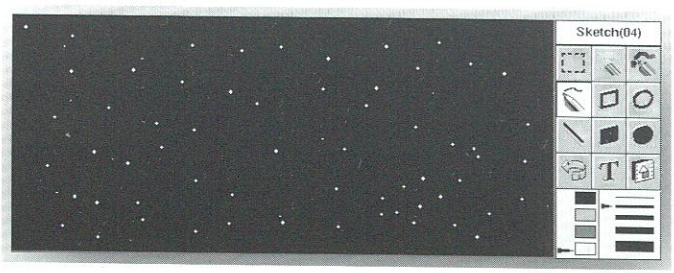
For simplicity's sake, we'll keep our picture at the default size of 532 by 236 pixels (dots). Note that the image *can* be any size you want, as SKETCH will simply put up horizontal and vertical scroll bars if need be. Although you can't see large images on screen by zooming out further, there is a rough and ready cheat that serves the purpose. Use 'Printing'/'Print preview' and you'll be able to get an overview of images up to A4 in size.

By the way, please don't panic if anything goes wrong: SKETCH has five 'undo' levels and <Ctrl><Z> will get you out of trouble at any time. Let's get going. Use <Fn><Sketch> to start a new SKETCH file.

To start our nice space backdrop, we need to fill the canvas with black 'ink'. One of Sketch's unfortunate deficiencies is the lack of a 'Fill' tool, so we'll have to improvise. A solid rectangle will do nicely, though I'm going to be fussy and insist on the rectangle covering the whole area—not just part of it. This is tricky using the pen (try it and see), so I'll introduce you to another handy technique.

Drawing with arrows...

SKETCH is also designed to be operated using the arrow keys in 'Etch-a-Sketch'



Space, the final frontier. Using the freehand drawing tool to paint in the stars

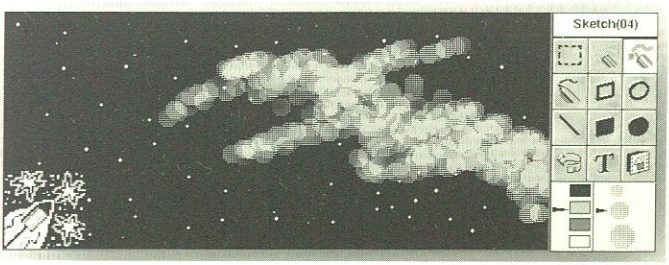
fashion, and we shall do this in order to start our rectangle in the extreme top-left-hand corner. Turn on 'Show cursor position' and 'Show cross-hairs' from the 'View' menu and then use the 'Home' and 'PgUp' keys to set the cross-hair to the top-left of the screen (co-ordinates 0,0). Next choose the 'Filled rectangle' tool from the toolbar (that's the one directly above the big letter 'T'). The box is actually drawn by holding down <Shift> and then the down and right arrow keys in turn. When the whole canvas is black, press <Enter> to 'fix' the shape in place. Note that although this arrow key/cursor technique can be very handy for precise drawing control, it's also slower and more than a little distracting. So you should now use the same menu options above to switch the cursor position and cross-hairs off again.

We're also going to start some real painting now. Using the pen, select the freehand drawing tool (the one that looks like a pencil) and the second line width setting from the five choices shown at the bottom right of the screen. Stars are (obviously) bright, so select white ink from the palette at the bottom and start touching the screen at random to dab out a star field. Remember that if you slip with the pen and accidentally draw a short line instead of a dot, just press <Ctrl><Z> to undo it.

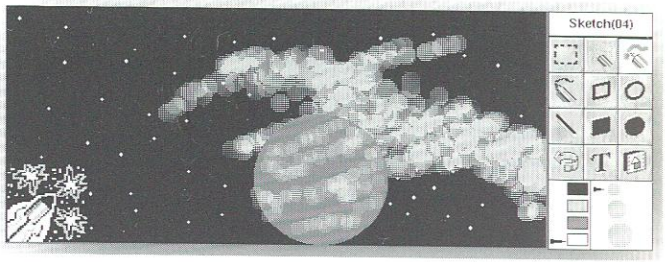
Controlling the rocket

Time for a rocket, which I would like to have blasting off out of the left-hand corner of the picture. Luckily, Psion provide a suitable picture in the built-in clip art. Before we overlay it though, I want the white of the rocket body to show up as solid, and not allow the void behind it to make the rocket invisible. Go to the 'Make transparent' option under the 'Transform' menu and make sure it's turned off (i.e. *not* ticked). Tapping on the clip art tool in the toolbar (bottom right) now brings up the Psion-produced icons. Tap on the rocket on the bottom row of icons and you should see it inserted in the top-left of the sketch with eight 'handles' round the outside.

These handles are very important as they not only denote that an area of the sketch is currently 'selected' but also allow resizing and moving of the area as needed. The first thing to note is that our



With the rocket and nebula safely in place



A textured planet and the Aerosol nebula? Spray them on with the spray paint tool

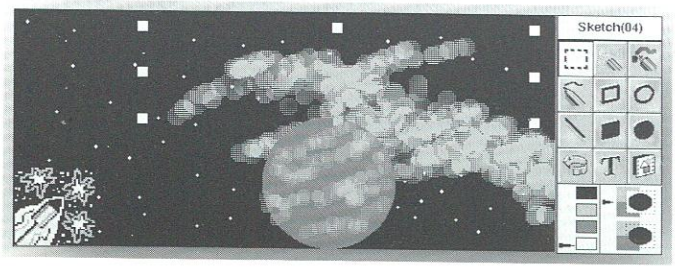
spaceship is in the wrong orientation, i.e. we needed a mirror image of it. No problem, use 'Flip horizontally' from the 'Transform' menu to do just that. It's also too small for my liking, so use the pen to drag the bottom-rightmost handle about a centimetre down and to the right. The selected area (the rocket) should resize itself happily. Lastly, and with the handles still showing, use the pen in the centre of the selected area to drag it down to the bottom-left corner as shown.

It's very important to understand how selections and pen operations work, so practice away and don't worry if you don't get the hang of it first time round! Being able to select and manipulate areas of an image at any time is a powerful feature and wouldn't be out of place in a PC software package. Now that the spaceship is facing the right way and in the right place, deselect the area by choosing another tool from the toolbox (the spray can is going to be used next, so tap on that one—the top right button).

Hit the spray gun

Choose the darker of the grey inks and have some fun spraying a nebula or a dust cloud or two onto your masterpiece. Use whichever spray size suits your particular stellar phenomenon!

Now for a planet. Choose the lighter grey ink, the 'Filled oval' tool, hold the <Control> key down and drag out a circle. Holding down the <Control> key will constrain the oval tool to draw perfect circles instead of ovals, and the rectangle tool to draw perfect squares.



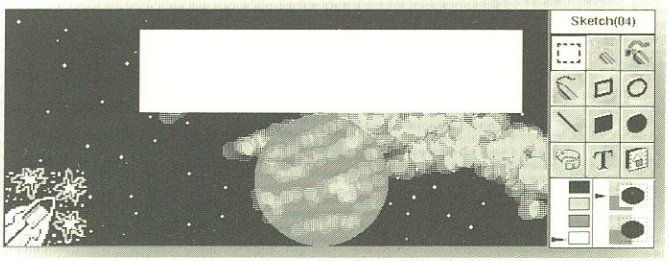
Using the selection tool to 'pick' a part of your nebula

Changing to the darker grey, use the spray can tool with a narrower spray width to sketch in some texture on the planet's surface. Note that you don't have to take the shown choice of widths for either strokes, lines or sprays. Under 'Tools'/'Palette tools'/'Width tool' you'll find you can explicitly set the width of any tool to an exact number of pixels. This is very useful, and a tip worth remembering.

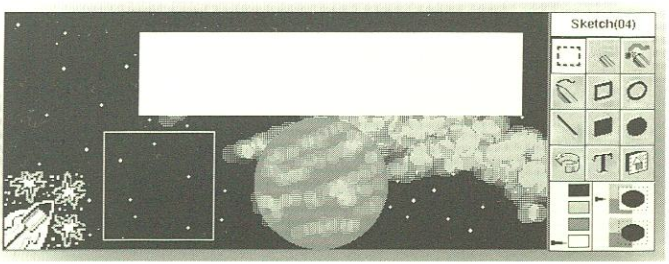
Tidying up

Once an item has been 'fixed' to the page it's too late to change it in any way in its original form (apart from using 'Undo' and going backwards, etc.), but the selection tool will let us take part of the fixed image and create a *new* selection. Let's say I've decided that the nebula we drew earlier is a bit too big and wish to remove the whole of the top section. The first step is to tap on the select tool (top left button) and drag a rectangle over the part of the picture we want to remove. Try not to cut away any of the planet in the process.

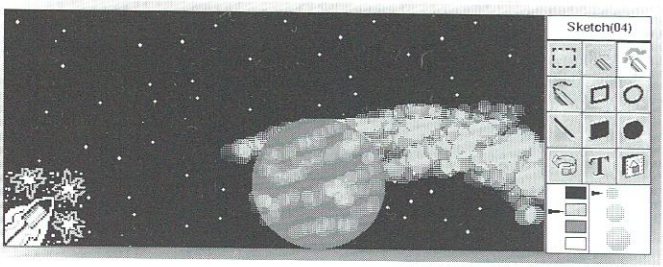
Hopefully you now have a region of space selected with the familiar handles. Press <Del> to delete it altogether. We now need to find a section of space that we can 'clone' to fill in the nasty white rectangle. Select a small square to the right of the spaceship and 'Copy' it to the clipboard. Now it merely remains to 'Paste' four or five times, each time using the pen to drag the pasted area of space over part of the white region. To be really tidy, you can use the dark grey spray can again to roughen up any artificially straight edges in the nebula. If there are parts of the



Creating our very own 'white hole'

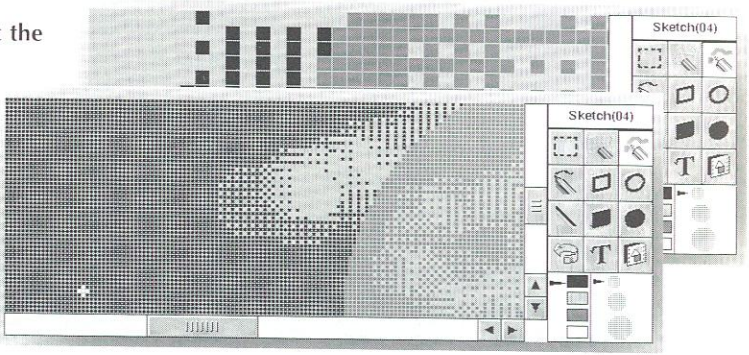


Selecting a suitable area of space to help fill the void



A smaller, tidier nebula

Don't forget the multiple zoom levels...

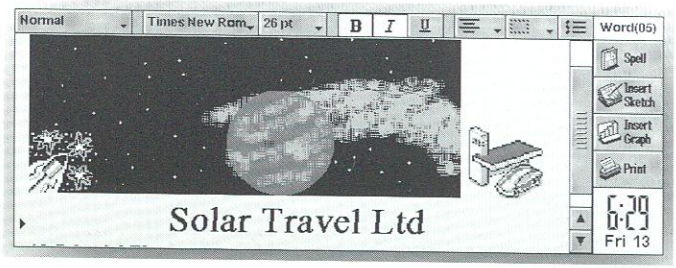


picture you feel need further touching up, note the way you can zoom in as shown above to paint in individual pixels.

Using your talents

I'm not the world's greatest artist, but hopefully I've demonstrated a few of the tricks that SKETCH has up its sleeve and inspired you to use your talent to create better and more useful images.

One major use of your ability will be to create graphics to grace your letter-heads—I'll cover this in more detail in future issues.



A letterhead for your new inter-planetary travel company

How to be a Bug-Hunter

Alan Richey talks about software bugs, and how best to proceed when you think you've found one...

You are happily tapping away on your Psion, and all of a sudden the program you are using does something totally unexpected and maybe even crashes. What do you do?

The first thing is—don't be *too* surprised. I know from my own experience as a shareware author that it is impossible to have a program of any reasonable size that doesn't have a bug in it *somewhere*, so you are bound to experience this at some time.

If the software comes from a commercial company then you'll need to contact their technical support department. If the program is shareware then you will usually be able to contact the author directly. Technical assistance can often be better with shareware programs than with large software houses, as you will almost always be discussing your technical problems with someone who really understands how the program works, not someone who is just working through a database of known faults.

A little detective work...

So, all you need to do is contact the program author with details of the problem and they will instantly fix it and send you a new copy? Well, almost, but there are a number of things you can do in advance to make life easier for both of you.

The first thing to do is to make sure it really is a bug and not a 'feature'. If the program crashes or freezes up your machine then it is fairly obvious, but just because it does something a little unexpected doesn't mean it is a bug. It may just be that the author has a slightly different idea from you on what should happen under a certain set of circumstances.

Read the manual

Particularly with shareware, which is often in a constant state of refinement, the next thing to do is to check the manual or the README file that accompanies the program for a list of possible known errors/bugs or an FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions). Program authors and technical support departments tend to get a little annoyed at having to answer questions that are already in the manual.

Is it me?

Also, double check that you haven't done something you shouldn't have. For example, I had a section in one of my own README files specifically requesting that a certain operation shouldn't be done as it would crash the program. I was then swamped with reports from people who promptly did it! I learnt a valuable lesson here, and future versions did not make the assumption that users would read the instructions. You will get much better service if you admit you have done something you shouldn't have which might have caused the problem.

Make sure it is actually the program that is at fault and not any kind of general error on your machine. For example, if an application refuses to print, make sure the built-in applications will print correctly—as the problem could well be somewhere else. It is sometimes worthwhile to run the same software on a friend's machine to see if a hardware problem is to blame.

Shareware specials

As I mentioned, shareware programs are usually in more of a state of flux than commercial programs, which tend to be debugged, released and never (or rarely) updated. The suggestions below relate more specifically to shareware, where your contact with the program's author is inevitably more direct.

If you have Internet access then check the shareware author's web site. Personally, I always keep a list of current 'bugs' posted on my home page, accompanied by suggested workarounds and timescales for the release of 'fixed' copies.

If the problem is a major one that should be obvious in normal use then the author should have picked it up already, so do a re-installation of the program in case your installation has become corrupt. If this is the first time you have used the program then download another copy first, just in case the one you have is corrupt.

Contacting shareware authors

Having exhausted all the above possibilities, it is probably now time to contact the author. Whether the software is commercial or shareware I believe it is basic good manners to do this initially

by private email (or telephone/letter), and not by starting a general discussion in an open Internet discussion forum. No author wants their dirty linen washed in public, so you will only antagonise, which is counter-productive. Save the open forum option for those rare instances where your queries are persistently unanswered—though make sure you had the contact details correct in the first place.

With commercial software you can reasonably expect a dedicated support network in return for the purchase price, but don't forget that almost all shareware authors do it in their spare time, and often have to fit in technical support during evenings or weekends. Also, you are about to enter into a 'special' relationship with this person—telling them that they are not perfect, so try to be a little tactful. Here are some golden rules that should help to yield the right results.

1. Be polite. As a shareware author it never ceases to amaze me that some people expect to get quick results by shouting at me (sending emails in all capital letters), insulting me, or complaining that the program is useless. They will eventually get served, but they certainly get put to the bottom of the pile first. Something along the lines of "Sorry to be a nuisance, but I've just had this problem.." is guaranteed to get a quick response.

2. Don't send an email that just says: "Dear <Author>, your program crashes/ doesn't load/won't work, please help". That is just wasting everyone's time, as the author will have to email you back asking for more details.

3. Always give the program name and version number. I have 24 programs in circulation and regularly get emails where the sender expects me to guess which program they are talking about.

4. Put yourself in the author's position. The first essential is to be able to reproduce the problem on their own machine in order to fix the bug. If it can't be reproduced then it may be almost impossible to fix. Therefore it's important to know exactly what you did to generate the fault in order to follow it through. If the problem is intermittent then see if you can find a reproducible set of circumstances that will cause the crash. I'm afraid a message along the lines of "xxx just happened but I can't reproduce it" is probably going to get an answer along the lines of "Thanks for the info, get back to me when you can reproduce it".

5. Don't be put off if the author replies initially that they cannot reproduce the problem. When doing this I try to be as tactful as possible, as people always seem to think I am accusing them of making up the problem. That is never the case—the reason is normally that the author probably

has a slightly different configuration setup to you and therefore it doesn't exhibit the same problem. For example, on S5BANK there are over 2000 possible configurations for the screen display and it is *impossible* to check every one. So it might take a few exchanges of emails and maybe swapping of configuration files before the author can track down the problem.

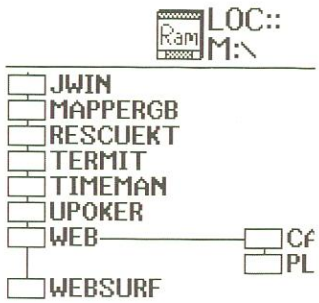
6. Don't be afraid of going into too much detail. One minor fact you have omitted might be the clue to a solution. For example, I spent nearly three weeks and dozens of emails trying to reproduce a fault in S5TASK before the user happened to mention that he always used the stylus to select the menu in preference to tapping the menu button, even when he was using the keyboard at the time. You can never give an author too much information—they can always ignore what they don't need. Remember, the author is not psychic.

7. If all else fails, the author may sometimes need your data set to put on their own machine in order to reproduce the problem. Often that is fairly easy, although with S5BANK I have to acknowledge that the financial data is sensitive. At this stage you just have to accept that the relationship between you and your shareware author is akin to that between you and your doctor. However, do clear the password first, or at least let the author know the password. I waste lots of time having to go through another iteration of emails after the data has been sent just so I can access it. Also, ZIP up the files first using WINZIP or PKZIP before emailing, and make sure you send only what's needed. I regularly get people sending me my own program back, which at 250K a time increases my phone bill somewhat.

Sooner or later, the author should manage to reproduce the problem and fix it. I would normally expect them to ask if you would like a new copy as a matter of courtesy, even if the problem is fairly trivial. However, the bottom line is that you have paid for the program, so you should expect a decent level of support.

I hope this has given you a few pointers on how to cope if ever you find bugs in software. If nothing else, at least you will know how to react if you find one in mine!

Desert island utilities



Three people nominate their favourite Series 3a/3c utilities of all time

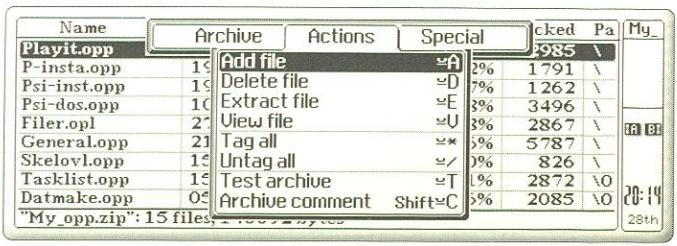
There are so many useful utility programs available for the Series 3a/3c machines that an all-embracing roundup of them would fill at least a couple of issues of the magazine. Here's a look at the top three choices of three separate 3a/3c users.

Phil Spencer

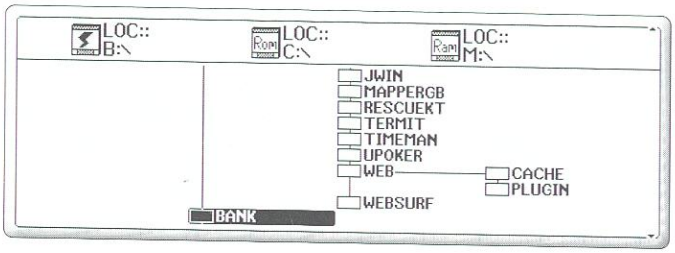
PsiZip

PsiZip (reviewed in issue 12) is the ultimate Psion-based program for zipping and unzipping files in PKZIP format. Its benefits aren't limited to users of PsiMail Internet who need to download ZIPped programs. As a programmer, I find PsiZip invaluable for compressing and storing scraps of useful code. Not only does this minimise the space they take up, it also makes organisation a lot easier as the files are all in one place. In fact, all Series 3 users with limited storage space will benefit from being able to keep compressed backups of old documents and files, or even of less frequently used programs.

As far as its implementation is concerned, this is one of the most



PsiZip's easy to use and uncluttered interface



Attractive and easy to use. Purple Software's *File Manager*

polished and easy to use 3a/3c programs available. This is one utility I wouldn't want to be without *anywhere, especially* on a desert island.

File Manager

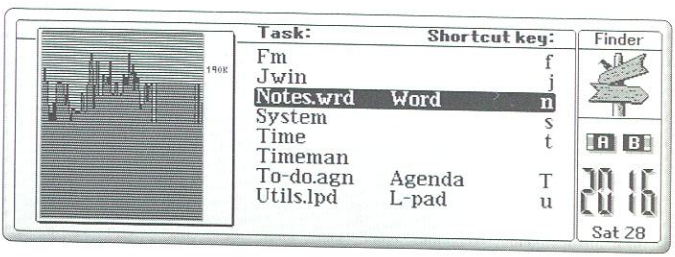
As utilities go, Purple Software's File Manager (reviewed in issue 4) is one of the very best. One of the easiest to use file managers available, its simplicity doesn't come at the expense of features. File Manager comes with all the information and 'tools' you'll need to keep your 3a/3c filing system in order, and it's permanently open on my 3a. As the screenshot shows, the display (with four zoom levels) is neat and tidy, being divided into 2 sections: one for quick disk selection at the top, and one for directory browsing at the bottom.

On the downside the online help is rather sparse, but given the overall ease of use this is not a major problem. The only major failing of File Manager is with its 'automatic' file launching, which is hard to setup and often unreliable with non-C (i.e. OPL) programs. Otherwise File Manager is an indispensable tool.

Finder

Finder is a little-known gem. With it you can dispense with cumbersome <Shift><System> keystrokes to cycle through running applications, in favour of something much easier. Finder sits in the background (using only around 20K of memory) and waits for the <Control><Space> keys to be pressed. It then jumps to the foreground and allows you to switch instantly to any of the listed programs/files currently open. Finder is written by the author of MacSys (Tom Dolbilin).

Instant jumping between open applications—*Finder*



Adrian Harper

Pason

Pason is the invisible freeware utility that you'll want to keep permanently loaded onto your machine. It's a very small program, taking less than 10K of memory, yet it performs an essential operation for many Psion owners. Pason controls your password system in such a way that you needn't enter your password *every* time you switch your Psion on. Yet if left switched off for a specified length of time, say an hour, the system password re-enables itself.

Many people don't want to go to the trouble of typing in a password every single time their machine is switched on, but also don't want to leave it completely unprotected. Pason solves this dilemma at a stroke by giving you precise control of how often the password appears.

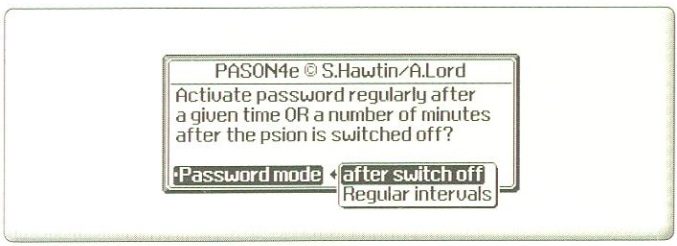
Pason also performs a few other useful functions: it can be configured to automatically switch off the remote link and to switch on system sounds at any specified time.

Before I discovered Pason I was forever turning off sound during a meeting, only to then forget to re-enable it later. In turn I ended up late for work the next day due to a missed alarm.

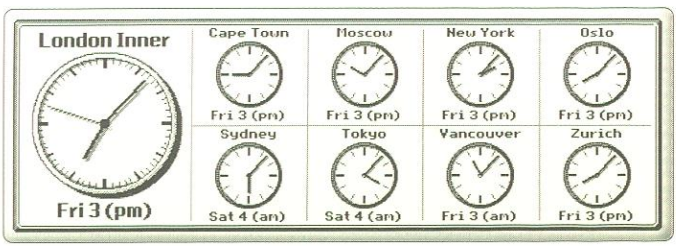
All in all, Pason is indispensable.

World Time

Another of my essential utilities would have to be World Time by Steve Godfrey, which is really an alternative to the built-in TIME application. The major advantage of World Time is that you can

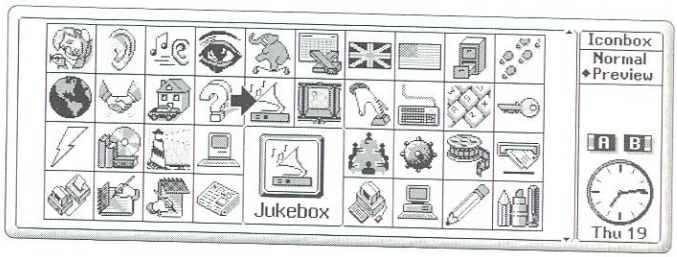

PASON4e © S.Hawtin/A.Lord
Activate password regularly after a given time OR a number of minutes after the psion is switched off?
Password mode
after switch off
Regular intervals

Pason—small, but immensely useful



Clocks, clocks, clocks. *World Time*

IconBox. **Replace the dull default group icons with something more interesting**



instantly see the time in your home country as well as eight other user-specified time zones around the world.

For a businessperson working in a company with offices around the globe, this utility is a must. The application is very well written and includes options to display either analogue or digital clocks.

World Time not only gives you the advantage of seeing the nine time zones simultaneously, but you also have the ability to set an alarm in any of them as well. The one disappointment is that it only has the capacity to store a single alarm at any time.

IconBox

Last but not least has to be IconBox, part of Purple Software's Toolkit 2.

If you own a Psion with a large SSD, you probably tend to install as many applications on it as I do. Each one installs yet another icon onto your system screen, which then needs lots of sideways scrolling in order to view all your programs. Personally I cannot use a machine that is cluttered in such a way, and I have to group applications using the 'Create new group' menu option. Unfortunately, when you create a lot of folders you end up with a number of dull icons that are identical.

This is where IconBox comes in. It is a library of 99 icons, mostly derived from Microsoft Windows. On starting the program you see something resembling a tile puzzle, with each square containing a different picture. Each picture can be exported as an icon file, and it is even possible to specify the type of decorative border you want to appear around the picture.

Once you have exported the picture of your choice it can be used in place of the standard plain icon—hey presto, instantly recognisable file groups.

Steve Clack

JBFind

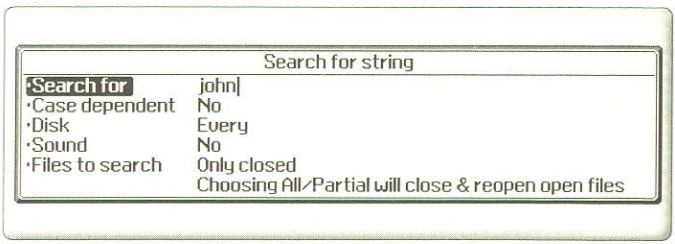
Anyone who had an old Psion Organiser II may well remember that it was possible to search the entire machine for any text using the built-in 'Search' function. This was a real boon if you knew that you had a note about 'XYZ' somewhere on your machine, but couldn't remember which database, notepad or other application it was in.

Such a universal 'sniffer dog' application also exists for the Series 3 range, in the shape of John Boyce's excellent JBFind. This can be configured to search for filenames as well as to go through every byte of data on your machine (including SSDs), and will show all the occurrences of your selection. If you are searching for a text string then it will even show the surrounding text to put the string into context, and will launch the associated application and automatically find and highlight the text for you!

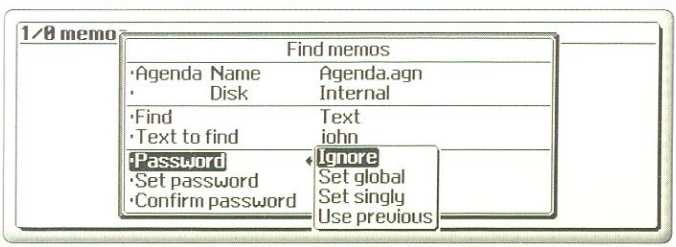
JBFind is beautifully executed, flexible, configurable, and is so useful that Psion should have included it on the Series 3c ROM.

MemoFind

Another search tool that Psion should have included as standard, MemoFind hunts through all the memos you have attached to your AGENDA entries and finds instances of any text string you specify. Of course, JBFind will also find text in your memos, but MemoFind is much faster because it doesn't have to scan through all your files, just the Agendas. It's a pity that you can't delete or otherwise manipulate the memo entries from within MemoFind, but it's a

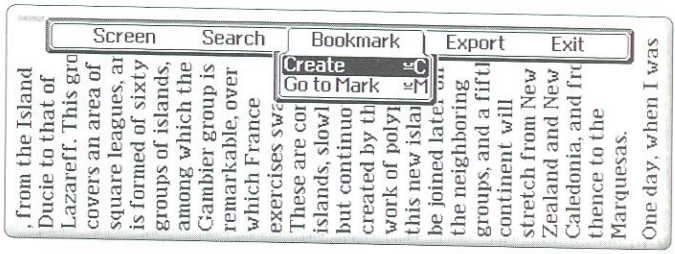


Search your entire machine with *JBFind*



Finding text in WORD memos, using *MemoFind*

Read novels on your Psion with *Reader*



must-have for all AGENDA users nonetheless.

Reader

Arguably an application rather than a utility, I just *had* to include this in my list. Reader breaks through the 40 kilobyte limit imposed by WORD, allowing you to view plain text files on your Series 3a/3c or Siena (there is a separate Siena version).

Apart from being able to import large reference documents from your desktop computer, Reader also allows you to access the vast array of novels available in plain text form for download from the Internet. These only comprise older titles that are out of copyright, but for anyone like myself who enjoys classic literature they are a great source of reading material.

As well as quickly scrolling around even the largest text files, Reader allows you to bookmark pages, zoom the font size, auto-scroll at varying speeds and even view the text sideways (see screen shot above) so you can hold your Psion more like a book. I have enjoyed several novels using Reader, and can wholeheartedly recommend it to all bookworms. The ability to carry a couple of novels in your pocket at any time is great for anyone who finds themselves with odd minutes to kill while on the move, and with a backlit 3c you can even enjoy reading in complete darkness!

Availability

All the programs apart from File Manager and IconBox are available as shareware or freeware, and are downloadable from the *Palmtop* web site (*www.palmtop.co.uk*) or the *Palmtop* CD-ROM (see page 107). The other two are available from all major Psion dealers.

A full article on reading 'electronic books' on the Psion appeared in issue 4, MemoFind was reviewed in issue 3, PsiZip in issue 12, File Manager in issue 4 and Toolkit 1/IconBox in issue 10.

5 for the 5

Five Series 5 personal finance packages battle it out...

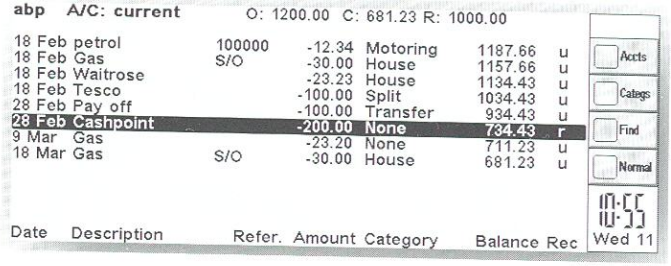
by Mark Moody and Alain Monasse

Money managers are vital applications for many palmtop users: some people have been known to buy Psions simply to use a particular financial package. The job of keeping track of money while on the move is perfectly suited to a Psion, without which you'd be forever scribbling on receipts and writing on the back of your hand—making the inevitable omissions and mistakes.

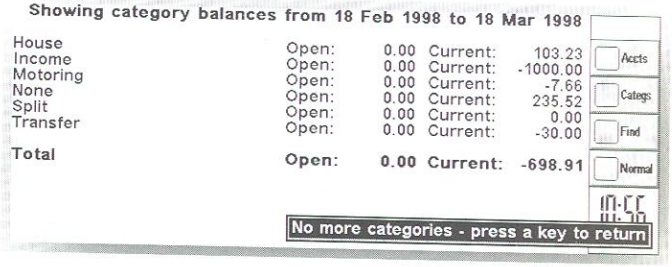
There is a good selection of finance managers available for each Psion machine (see issue 8 for a roundup of the major 3a/3c finance packages). Nine months after the Series 5's launch there are five different packages available for it, at prices ranging from nothing at all to around £50. We'll take a look at the five packages in turn.

ABP

The minimally named ABP ('A Banking Program'—we kid you not) is the only one of the applications reviewed to be freeware. Although the old adage "You get what you pay for" isn't always true in the software world, it seems applicable to ABP. Although it coped well enough with day to day transactions, we couldn't help but feel that many of the program's functions were patchily implemented. The accounts and categories summary screens seemed almost like afterthoughts and the mechanism for account transfers appeared unnecessarily clumsy. Getting information out of ABP is restricted to separate Quicken export files, one for each account, and a fixed-format printed account transaction summary.


abp A/C: current O: 1200.00 C: 681.23 R: 1000.00
18 Feb petrol 100000 -12.34 Motoring 1187.66 u
18 Feb Gas S/O -30.00 House 1157.66 u
18 Feb Waitrose -23.23 House 1134.43 u
18 Feb Tesco -100.00 Split 1034.43 u
28 Feb Pay off -100.00 Transfer 934.43 u
28 Feb Cashpoint -200.00 None 734.43 r
9 Mar Gas -23.20 None 711.23 u
18 Mar Gas S/O -30.00 House 681.23 u
Date Description Refer. Amount Category Balance Rec
Accts
Categs
Find
Normal
Wed 11

ABP hard at work


Showing category balances from 18 Feb 1998 to 18 Mar 1998
House Open: 0.00 Current: 103.23
Income Open: 0.00 Current: -1000.00
Motoring Open: 0.00 Current: -7.66
None Open: 0.00 Current: 235.52
Split Open: 0.00 Current: 0.00
Transfer Open: 0.00 Current: -30.00
Total Open: 0.00 Current: -698.91
No more categories - press a key to return
Accts
Categs
Find
Normal

Category balances—close but no cigar

The use of accounts (repositories of money) and categories (income or expense, i.e. sources of money or things to spend it on) in a 'double-entry' environment is a well-established system which works well for both personal use and for small businesses. ABP claims to have implemented double-entry bookkeeping, but the lack of visible transaction books for any of the categories and the confusing 'None' category didn't inspire confidence.

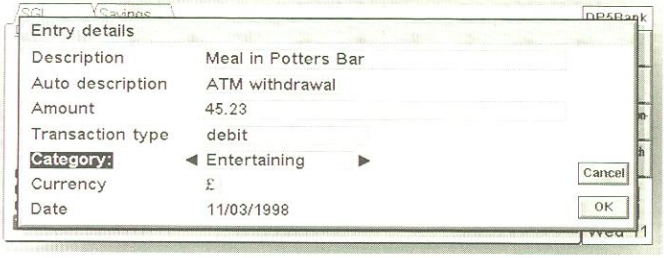
Foreign currency support is also rather weak: we would have liked to have been able to define bank or cash accounts in francs, DM, etc.

On the plus side, ABP has good help screens, a handy auto-backup function and a detailed search system. There's also the useful facility to look into the future and predict an account balance at any point. The application is also impressively fast and most operations were almost instantaneous.

We really *wanted* to like ABP (and certainly haven't given up watching its development). The prospect of a top quality money manager for free is positively mouth-watering, but we ultimately found the program rather frustrating in its current guise.

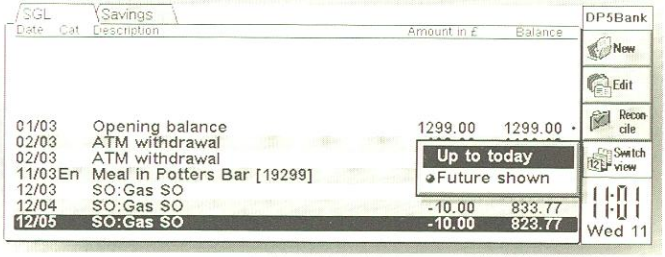
DPBank

On to the three shareware contenders. DPBank is a program that's been around for a long time on the 3a/3c. Although it *looks* more professional than ABP, the level of functionality is very similar. We liked its tabbed interface, giving quick and intuitive access to any account. Income and expense categories are



DPBank—note the auto-description field

Nice face, shame about the speed



handled in the same way as ABP, with only summary information available—we would have liked to have seen 'tabs' for each category as well. The author admits in the help screens that support for categories is mainly included just to be compatible with Quicken on the PC, to which (and from which) there are good export and import filters included. As with ABP, the inclusion of a 'None' category is in our opinion a bad idea and a recipe for sloppy accounting.

One immediately obvious problem with DPBank is its speed. Entering a single transaction took up to 5 seconds of processing time before the program refreshed its display. This sort of delay would get annoying when using the software on a regular basis.

The implementation of standing orders and the facility to look ahead a certain number of days both work well, though you are restricted to monthly repeat intervals.

Auto-descriptions are a unique DPBank feature. The idea is that common descriptive text for transactions is held in a pop-up list to save time when typing in a new entry. The feature is well integrated into the program and almost makes up for the slow processing speed.

Currency support is reasonable and accounts can be created in any currency, though integration of monies in these accounts with those in your 'home' currency is limited to simple transfers. Attempts to spread category expenditure over several currencies (for example, travel expenses in pounds and francs on a business trip to Paris) just met with confusion.

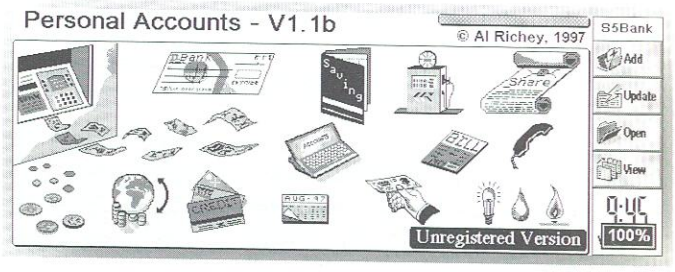
Although another fairly capable package, DPBank left us wanting more.

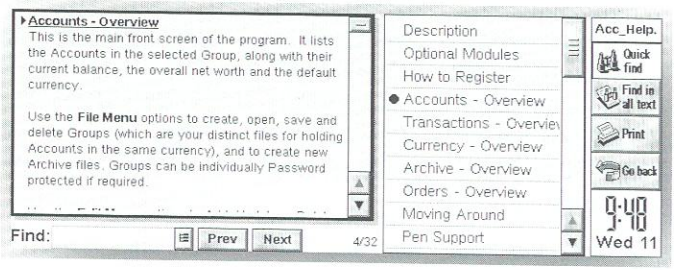
S5Bank

S5Bank is a different kettle of fish. It immediately impresses as being of 'industrial strength' and should be able to cope with almost any financial event thrown at it. Most of the core functionality of ABP and DPBank is here, plus loosely integrated modules for budgeting, expenses, stocks and shares, fuel consumption and home inventory.

Each module's information can be updated from the main transaction dialogs through either a special 'Update' line or a 'Modules' button. Although these methods work well enough when you remember to use them, we found it all too easy to rush through each transaction without worrying about where money is coming from or going to. The modules each

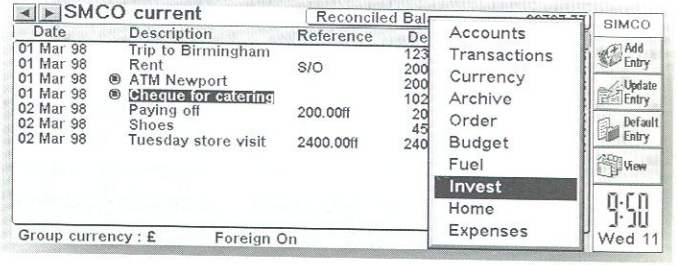
S5Bank— professional from the word 'go'...




Accounts - Overview
This is the main front screen of the program. It lists the Accounts in the selected Group, along with their current balance, the overall net worth and the default currency.
Use the File Menu options to create, open, save and delete Groups (which are your distinct files for holding Accounts in the same currency), and to create new Archive files. Groups can be individually Password protected if required.
Find:
Prev
Next
4/32
Description
Optional Modules
How to Register
Accounts - Overview
Transactions - Overvie
Currency - Overview
Archive - Overview
Orders - Overview
Moving Around
Pen Support
Acc_Help.
Quick find
Find in all text
Print
Go back
Wed 11

...backed up by comprehensive help screens...

...and lots of functionality



have their own menu structure and can be selected using a clever pop-up list.

The program has gone through much iteration on the Series 3a over the years and this has resulted in an extremely professional appearance, with well-designed menus and dialogs that are models of usability. We especially liked the way the toolbar changed to reflect the module or screen currently being shown and beginners should find most common operations available to them at the tap of a button.

The speed issue that afflicts DPBank is here as well, with some operations taking five or six seconds to complete. Although not a showstopper, the delays dent S5Bank's professional image somewhat. It's further tarnished by the absolute limit of 200 transactions per account, though at least the author addresses this limitation with extensive archiving (and de-archiving) functionality.

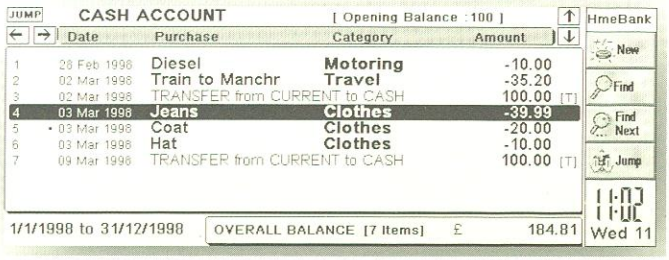
As with the other programs reviewed so far, currency support is patchy, with accounting errors creeping in when multiple currencies are in use. Printing support is also basic, with little control over the formatting of the printed output. The saving grace is the excellent 'Filter' facility by which you can preselect a subset of any of the main summary or transaction sets for screen display or for printing.

Prediction of a future balance is elegantly done, with menus and toolbars changing to indicate that you're in 'Look ahead' mode and that normal editing functions are all disabled.

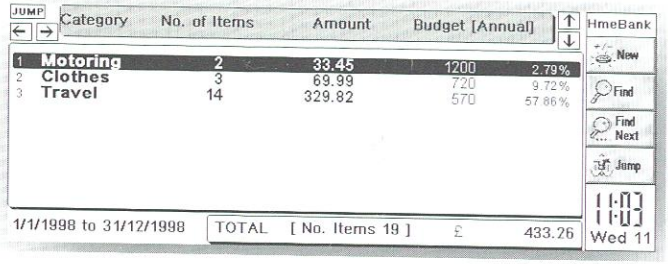
S5Bank is very capable if your main requirement is to record transactions, keep track of balances or if you need any of its specialist modules, each of which is rich enough to be a program in its own right. Its good points outweigh the bad ones and we thought it excellent value for money.

HomeBank

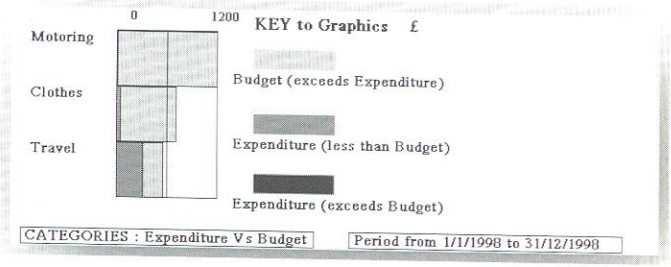
Taking a slightly different view of home finances is HomeBank. Newly created for the Series 5, it concentrates on the budgeting of income and expense categories rather than on the accounts themselves. Although this makes little difference in terms of core functionality, the appearance and behaviour of the appli-


JUMP
CASH ACCOUNT
[Opening Balance :100]
HmeBank
Date
Purchase
Category
Amount
1 28 Feb 1998 Diesel Motoring -10.00
2 02 Mar 1998 Train to Manchr Travel -35.20
3 02 Mar 1998 TRANSFER from CURRENT to CASH 100.00 [T]
4 03 Mar 1998 Jeans Clothes -39.99
5 03 Mar 1998 Coat Clothes -20.00
6 03 Mar 1998 Hat Clothes -10.00
7 09 Mar 1998 TRANSFER from CURRENT to CASH 100.00 [T]
New
Find
Find Next
Jump
1/1/1998 to 31/12/1998
OVERALL BALANCE [7 Items] £ 184.81
Wed 11

HomeBank—giving a helping hand with your wallet



Managing your expenses the easy way



HomeBank at its most attractive

cation are quite dissimilar to the others.

This emphasis on budgeting is aimed very much at the home user struggling to manage their finances for the year ahead. Budgets can be set on a monthly or annual basis and expenditure vs. budget tables and graphs generated for any given period of time. The primary screen shows the category summary, with budgets and pro rata percentages. Secondary screens show transactions, filtered transactions (by category) and entries for the currently selected bank account. The system works well and provides a refreshing dimension to home accounting.

HomeBank is still fairly new and its unconventional menu structure does little to endear the user. Alternate pen and keyboard input mechanisms are scattered liberally throughout the program. This is one piece of software where the help screens are mandatory reading before starting to use the program in anger.

Although written in OPL, HomeBank shows a good turn of speed and most transactions are processed near instantaneously. Conversely, the rewriting of the screen can sometimes hold things up instead and the author would do well to look at his display routines. This and other niggles, such as the short 15-character limit on transaction descriptions, will no doubt be fixed as HomeBank matures. At least the welcome absence of a 'None' category and the enforced presence of a 'cash' account will help keep users on the accounting straight and narrow. Existing S5Bank (and similar) users would face a steep but

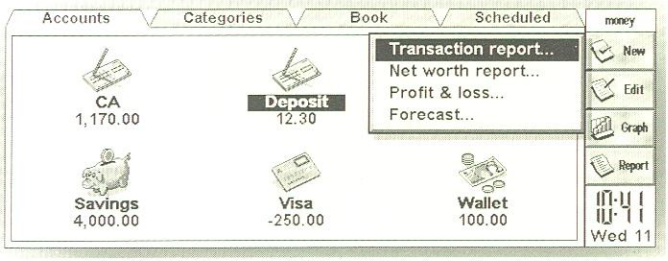
worthwhile learning curve while newcomers will welcome HomeBank with enthusiasm.

Money

The brand new Series 5 Money is from Palmtop BV in The Netherlands, the people who brought us En Route. A direct development of the original 3a version that so many people swore by, the authors have obviously tried hard to keep as much of the program's workings as similar as possible. While most of the other programs we've reviewed have fallen shy of full double-entry book-keeping, Money has implemented it throughout. Although it runs the risk of confusing beginners, who may find it hard to get used to the concept of having to keep cash accounts and account for every penny with income and expense categories, its sheer comprehensiveness for basic financial management is difficult to fault.

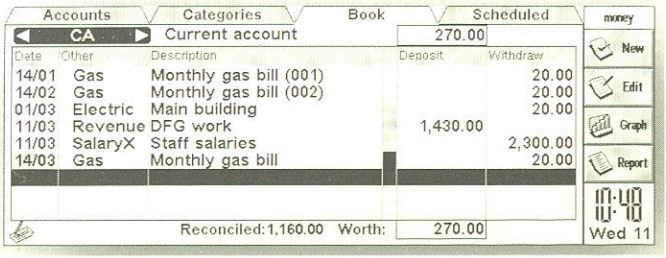
Money's C++ heritage means that it runs very fast indeed, with every operation that we tried (including display updates) completing in under one second. This would be a major time-saver for someone with a busy financial life. Another result of being written in C++ is a greater tie-in with the routines in the Series 5 ROM. For example, the graphing module from SHEET pops up to present all of Money's graphs and many of the dialogs are neatly 'tabbed'.

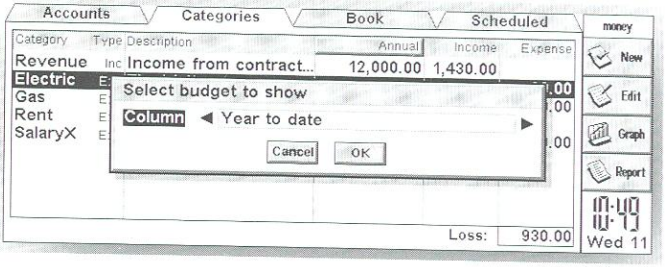
We found the general interface very easy to get to grips with, with tabs for accounts, categories, transaction books and standing orders. Navigation within



Overviewing your finances in *Money*

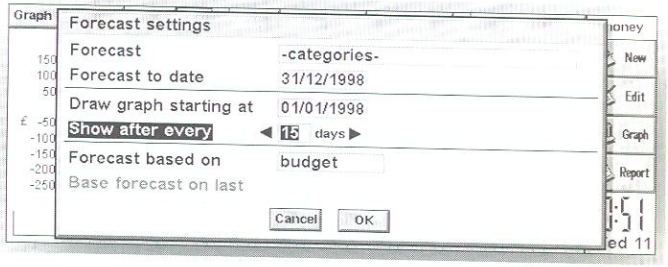
A typical transaction book

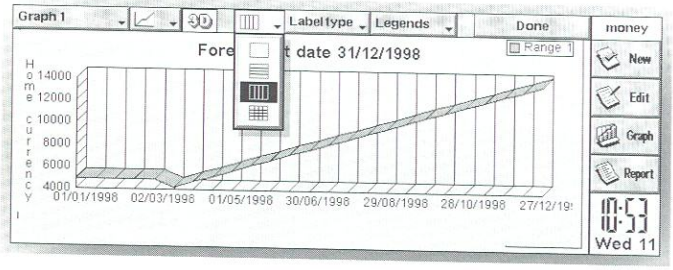




Changing the setup of the category screen

Setting up an expense forecast in *Money*





So handsome, we could have been using SHEET

each tabbed page is also easy using pen or keyboard. Once accustomed to Money's double-entry ethos, the program is a pleasure to use.

Nearly all the bells and whistles of the other applications reviewed are also featured in Money (see the table on page 66), plus a few twists of its own. Five zoom levels, right or left-handed toolbar, and a reporting section that puts the others to shame. Transaction, 'net worth', 'profit & loss' and forecast reports, each with a setup dialog and full graphics support. Both text reports and graphs can also be printed.

The misleadingly-named 'Layout' feature is a major boon, allowing unlimited numbers of report filters and settings to be saved for future use. When called up again, the report structures are the same but the data is live.

Equally impressive is the way that much of Money's complexity can be switched

off if necessary, with menu options simply disappearing from view. So if a user finds the VAT support confusing, for example, it can be removed completely. The same applies for currency support, transaction status, budgets and standing orders, with the program doing a very good job of being all things to all people. The only disadvantage of Money is that it's commercial software and therefore cannot be tried out before purchase.

Conclusions

If finances are tight (as is possible if you need a money manager in the first place), then be reassured at the wealth of functionality available as freeware or shareware, with S5Bank and HomeBank both deserving honourable mentions. But if your wallet can stretch far enough, our highest recommendation goes to Money.

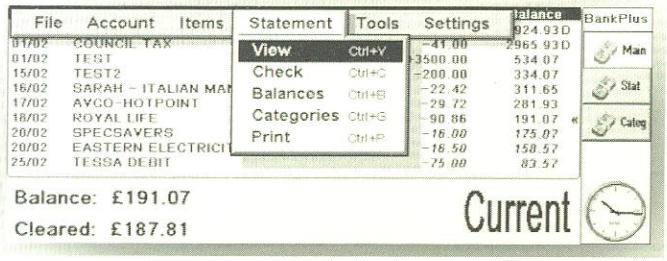
Even the least eagle-eyed *Palmtop* observers will have noted that there's no mention of Quicken in the main review. Despite being on Psion's 'forthcoming' product list for the best part of a year, it has been officially dropped due to licensing problems with Intuit, Quicken's makers.

Also long-awaited was BankPlus for the Series 5, written by *Palmtop*'s own Pete Sipple, but this has been delayed due to his work pressures and wasn't available for review. The software is currently in beta release.

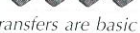
Pelican Software's Banker is also not ready yet and is still being tested. We expect to have a beta release for review sometime in April, and hope to be covering this product in the next issue.

Availability

All of the shareware/freeware programs in this article are available from the *Palmtop* web site (*www.palmtop.co.uk*) or from the latest *Palmtop* CD02. Palmtop BV's Money software will be available in May 1998 from all major Psion dealers. The price has not been finalised at the time of going to press.



BankPlus for the Series 5. Awaiting finishing touches...

	ABP	DPBank	S5Bank	HomeBank	Money
Author	Malcolm Bryant	Daniel Pfund	Alan Richey	Nigel Bamber	Palmtop BV
Price (pounds)	Free	£15	£20	£10	TBA
Type	Freeware	Shareware	Shareware	Shareware	Commercial
Maximum number of accounts	unlimited	12	20 per group	20	126
Maximum number of categories	unlimited	unlimited	50	40	126
Maximum transactions per account	unlimited	unlimited	200	unlimited	2000
Auto cheque numbering/tracking	○	●	●	○	○
Categories	◐	◐	◐	●	●
Printing support	◐	◐	◐	◐	●
Currency support	◐	◐	◐	◐	●
Graphics	○	○	○	◐	●
Budgets	○	○	●	●	●
Quicken import	◐ (per account)	●	●	○	●
Quicken export	◐ (per account)	●	◐ (per account)	○	◐ (per account)
Foreign language support	○	●	●	○	●
Memory requirements	300K	200K	600K	380K	400K
Disk space requirements	90K	90K	500K	180K	400K
Version reviewed	1.33	1.1e	1.1b	1.8	1.0
Split transactions	◐	○	◐	○	●
VAT support	○	○	◐	○	●
Backups	auto	none	auto	manual	manual
Reconciling of transactions	●	●	●	○	●
Overall rating					

NOTE: Standing Orders, future balance prediction, transaction archiving and account transfers are basic operations supported by all programs in the review.

● = *Full support* ◐ = *partial support* ○ = *no support*

The FIVE zone

A look at the latest developments in the Series 5 world

by Steve Litchfield

Belated apologies for all those readers tired of reading about Palmtop BV software in our reviews section, but they seem to be the only commercial company producing Series 5 programs in any quantity. Shareware authors have been more prolific, but even so there are still less than 100 serious packages for the '5'. Far from implying that developers lack faith in Psion's new flagship operating system, I think that in a strange way EPOC/32 is a victim of its own success. Let me explain...

Cast your mind back if you can, to the days of DOS 5.0 and 6.0 on the PC. In two strokes their release by Microsoft obviated the need for dozens of the third party utilities of the day (editors, command processors, file managers, disk optimisers, etc.), the functions of which were now contained within the operating system itself. Similarly, Windows 95's inclusion of WordPad and a host of other 'mini' applications has meant that many people really can manage with little other software beyond what came in the system box.

Richer and richer

Psion's EPOC/32 is now incredibly rich in functionality, with fully graphical office applications and capabilities built into its interface, many of which used to be the province of add-on utilities. Again, many people will find all the applications and functions they need already built into the ROM. Here at *Palmtop* we've even been running a series of articles showing how you can quite happily implement common business requirements using only what Psion provide. Many of the best Series 3a/3c utilities have been rendered obsolete in the Series 5, with features like

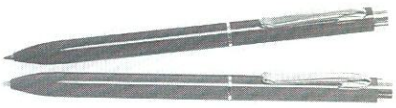
once-a-day passwords, graphical file management, task switching and point-and-shoot foreign character selection, all now built-in by Psion.

The 5's Dictaphone features have put paid to the need for third party memo recorders and the unlimited file size of WORD files largely puts the 3a/3c text file readers out of a job. Games software seems to have the clearest field, with the built-in Bombs game offering little to compete with the wealth of leisure programs already available.

Mind you, it's all good news for you, the Psion consumer. I know I'm biased, but the Series 5 with all its built-in software, bundled PsiWin and free Internet software really does represent fantastic value for money, especially now the price of the 8MB model has just been dropped by £70. And with developers forced to think ever more creatively to widen the application range, the future looks very bright indeed. The sheer diversity (if not quantity) of 32-bit Psion software already exceeds that for the 16-bit scene. For proof of this see 'Shareware Shorts' and 'A Closer Look' in the past few issues.

An alternative pen

I'm a sucker for a good gadget (as if the Series 5 itself wasn't enough) and Widget Software (tel: 01438 815444) have pandered to me recently with the '2 in 1 stylus/pen' (nicknamed the DuoPen). All '5' owners who find themselves continually swapping between



ballpoint and S5 stylus will appreciate this combination pen. A twist of the barrel and the black ballpoint retracts to be replaced by a plastic stylus. The DuoPen's 'feel' in stylus mode is quite superb, making things like jotted notes, diagrams and signatures far easier to do naturally. A resounding thumbs up for a great idea that's been especially well implemented.

Buy big!

The old saying goes that a collection of just about anything will grow over time to fill the space available. It's particularly true for Psion software on Compact Flash (CF), and a word of warning might be appropriate here. Make sure you buy the biggest disk you can afford, as the combination of larger, more ambitious

32MB CF—bigger ones on the way...

programs and the relative inefficiency of the CF filing system mean that you'll fill disks faster than you might think. Yes, CF disks are a quarter the price of the equivalent Series 3 SSDs, but they also fill up four times as fast!

Stepping onto the rumour mill for a moment, I hear that 48MB CF disks are only a month or so away, though they're bound to attract a hefty premium in the first few months of sale. Even more incredible is that 100MB disks will be with us next year. That's an awful lot of storage space for a chip 4cm across, and will enable reference software (such as Halliwell's, Route Planner (En Route), UK Pocket Directory, etc.) to become more and more ambitious. Anyone want to bet on an encyclopedia on the Series 5 before the millennium? I think your money would be well placed.

The CE threat?

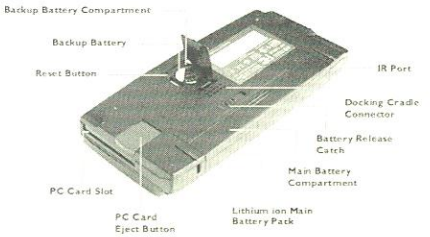
We promised you a sneak peek at the Windows CE competition in the last issue and I have just had a chance to play with an HP620 colour palmtop. The very first impression is awesome, in

The HP620 screen

that the backlit colour screen grabs the attention, but further use revealed most of the shortcomings already associated with Windows CE machines. Namely, the inferior keyboards, short battery life and the huge size (twice the volume of a Series 5). Somehow the Win CE manufacturers seem to keep missing the point about handheld computers needing to be truly pocketable. Even a Series 5 pushes the limits of some pockets and the HP620 and others are really only destined for the briefcase.

Cracked hinges?

When is a crack not a crack? When it's a moulding line. Now, I know that some unlucky owners have had genuine hinge problems on the Series 5, with parts of the mechanism physically separating



The Emperor's new clothes? The HP620LX should not be a threat to the Series 5

and becoming unusable. But don't take these horror stories as excuses to panic. Looking at my own two Fives (okay, so one belongs to my wife), both show identical styling lines in the plastic moulding on or around the hinge area on either side of the screen. This is how the case is *supposed* to look, so don't worry about the lines being cracks that are developing.

In many instances, it seems to be the same people complaining about how the hinges have cracked yet again, and how they are on their third or fourth Psion. In such cases, I suspect that the failures are somehow linked to the way the Series 5 is being used (or misused). Treat your precious Psion gently, opening and closing it slowly. Never let it snap open or shut and *please* try not to drop it. It's not just valuable as a computer—it's probably got most of your life stored on it too.

Battery power

One palmtop computer-related issue that deserves a wider airing is the discussion of battery types. Yes, I know it's tempting to use rechargeables in your battery-hungry Psion 5, but consider the disadvantages:

- Fully charged units will still only give you four or five hours usage at most. With the backlight on, you may be reduced to less than two.
- Rechargeables tend to 'die' very quickly rather than fade over a period of time, leaving you in the lurch with very little warning.
- Rechargeables usually run at a different voltage (as low as 1.2V each), meaning that you run the risk of digital sound refusing to play, the backlight not turning on and CF disks refusing to be written to.

Psion have always said that they design their machines to run on alkaline batteries and I for one live by that advice. Some may argue that alkaline batteries are less environmentally friendly. This is true, but I'd recommend using them anyway and finding other ways to help the planet.

Sudden death

I read with sympathy the reader's letter about using a Psion while in public. I don't usually feel too self-conscious about whipping out my Series 5, but have occasionally been reprimanded. Most famously by the hand of the Almighty. During a particularly long sermon and sitting near the back of the church I decided I'd finish off some programming work. Almost immediately my Psion's screen went black and the machine died. Totally died. It needed a trip to Greenford to resurrect the poor thing. If you have any interesting experiences resulting from airing *your* palmtop in public, do please write in!

How to connect your Psion to the Internet

The first part of a beginners' guide to setting up your Series 3a/3c or Series 5 for email and World Wide Web access

by Steve Clack

Following on from the troubles we had making a successful Internet connection using an Ericsson GS18 GSM telephone recently, we've decided to expand our GS18 article into a complete beginners' guide to connecting your Psion to the Internet.

There's no doubt about it—communications is still something of a black art, and connecting a Psion (or any other computer) to the Internet is the most complex thing most users will ever attempt to set up. The whole subject has more than its fair share of incomprehensible jargon, at least for the beginner: there are a number of setup options that must be configured correctly in the software, and all aspects of the hardware connection have to be precisely correct too. Novices can easily get lost somewhere along the line, often failing to make a connection, not knowing which part of the setup process is wrong, and left wondering what to do next.

Good news is at hand though, as once successfully configured, Internet connections usually work quite smoothly. The trick is to get through the setup process as painlessly as possible, so you can then concentrate on using your Internet account for the purpose it was intended.

The Internet?

Having an Internet connection set up for your Series 3a/3c or Series 5 will enable you to send and receive electronic mail (email) messages, and to access the World Wide Web (WWW)—that vast repository of useful information and

files. Although the 'Web' contains masses of information covering everything from gardening to goat breeding, it's especially useful for Psion users because many of the Psion-related web sites contain software and other useful files that you can download (transfer into your Psion), all free of charge—apart from your basic Internet connection cost and telephone charges.

What do I need?

You'll need three things for a successful Internet connection:

1. Internet software for your particular model of Psion computer.
2. A suitable 'modem' (plus cables and probably a null modem adaptor, which we'll discuss in the next instalment).
3. An account with an Internet Service Provider (ISP), who will provide you with telephone access to their computer system—your gateway to the Internet.

Where to start

Throughout this article we'll assume that you have very little knowledge of the Internet, and probably don't have any of the three requisite items listed above.

Software

This is the most obvious place to start. There is only one software option for each of the Psion computer models, and installing the software will help you to make the best decision on which modems and ISPs you should use. Here's what you need:

For the Series 3a/3c - You'll need a copy of PsiMail Internet, available from Psion dealers at around £60. This is only supplied on PC floppy disk, so you'll need access to either a PC or a Cyclone disk drive to load the software onto your Psion.

For the Series 5 - The 'Message Suite' is available for free download from Psion's web site. The catch is of course that if you don't already have access to another computer with a web connection then you won't be able to download it in the first place! You can get around this by transferring the software from the *Palmtop* CD if you have access to a PC with a CD-ROM drive, otherwise you'll just have to find a friend or colleague with Internet access who will download the file for you (the zipped Message Suite is currently around 1.2 megabytes in size).

Modems

A 'modem' (MOdulator-DEModulator) is a little box that connects your Psion to the telephone line. It converts the warbles transmitted over the phone lines to and from the digital pulses generated by computers.

Modems are largely computer-independent, and if you already have a modem

The Psion Travel Modem

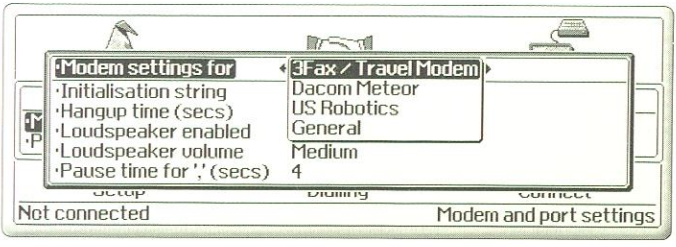
lying around somewhere then you should be able to connect it successfully to your Psion. You'll need to adapt the connector on the modem to attach to your Psion and perhaps experiment with the modem settings in your Internet software, but we'll look at this later.

Psion Travel Modem

If you don't already have a modem and you want to make life easy for yourself then most users will find it easiest to buy Psion's own Travel Modem (reviewed in issue 10). This comes with the correct cable to plug directly into your Series 3c or Series 5 without any adaptors or extra cables, and appears as a specific modem type in both the PsiMail Internet and Message Suite software, and thus requires no software setup beyond selecting 'Psion Travel Modem' from a pop-up list.

If you have a Series 3a then you need the Psion '3Fax' modem, the earlier cousin of the Travel Modem. These are no longer available, so you'll need to look out for one on the second-hand market.

Until recently, the Travel Modem was priced at around £200, but that has now been halved to under £100, which represents good value for money. The Travel Modem will only transfer data at a maximum speed of 14,400bps (bits per second) which is by no means the fastest available (28,800 or 33,600bps are more common for portable modems), but unless you are going to be spending a lot of time browsing the web then you won't find the slower speed any great problem. If you want an Internet connection purely for email access then your typical connection time will only be a matter of seconds anyway, so the speed is even less of an issue.



If you want to make things especially easy for yourself, use one of the pre-configured modem types

Other modems

If you plan to be spending a lot of time on the web or prefer something a little more state-of-the-art, there are other, faster, portable modems available, though none are quite as compact or convenient as Psion's own Travel Modem. Any generic modem should be usable with your Psion, but be aware that in order to connect to it you'll need the 3Link/PsiWin cable, which in the case of the 3a/3c means another £80 cost, and in the case of the 3a cable quite a bit of additional bulk to carry around.

PC (PCMCIA) card modems are becoming increasingly popular, and when used with Psion's PC Card Modem Adaptor (reviewed in issue 11) make a fairly compact solution. Again the cost is higher than if using the Travel Modem, as you'll spend at least £100 on the card modem itself, plus another £100 just for the adaptor.

Psion's PC Card Modem Adaptor

Truly mobile

All of the above solutions assume that you have access to a conventional 'landline' telephone socket to plug your modem into. If you need a truly mobile solution then you may wish to consider a GSM mobile phone with built-in modem. The Ericsson GS18 is currently available for around £100 (depending upon which airtime tariff you choose to go with it), but the telecommunications industry is moving fast, so look out for similar telephones from other manufacturers. Phones with built-in modems have the beauty of requiring only a single cable to connect Psion and telephone together, and thus offer a very compact communications solution.

Looking to the future

For Series 5 users a simpler solution is on the horizon. EasyGSM, due out from Psion around the middle of this year, will enable your Series 5 to 'emulate' a modem with its own software—a feat which takes considerable processing power—and hook directly to almost any GSM telephone without a hardware modem of any kind.

In the next issue we'll look at Internet Service Providers and how to set up ready for connection.

The FOX's Den

Our new regular feature especially for owners of the first Psion-compatible computer, the Geofox One

by Steve Clack

There's no question about it, the Geofox One is 'King of the comms'. Making an Internet connection is a simple matter of plugging in the Dacom Gold Card modem supplied with the Geofox (the 'Professional' model only), plugging into the telephone socket and pressing the email or web browsing hotkey.

Flexible connections

If you plan to do a lot of emailing from your palmtop then the Geofox One is a great choice. I set up my 'fox in a matter of minutes, and with the internal Dacom PC card modem was on the Internet without any of the usual mass of trailing cables—just the one from the computer to the telephone socket.

GS18—no problem

Similarly, connecting to an Ericsson GS18 GSM phone was dead easy too. The GS18 has its own integral modem (see the previous article starting on page 71), and needs only the standard Ericsson data cable plus a short adaptor (part number 501034) available for £22 inc. VAT directly from Geofox.

For GS18 Internet access, hit the 'Modems' icon from the control panel, create a new 'GS18' modem type and set the following parameters:

Init. string: AT&FS25=50

Port speed: 9600 (serial port 0)

Flow control: Hardware

Terminal detect/carrier detect: OFF

With this complete, just set up your Internet Service Provider from the 'Network' section of the control panel, plug in the cables and go—anywhere with GSM coverage!

Big screen

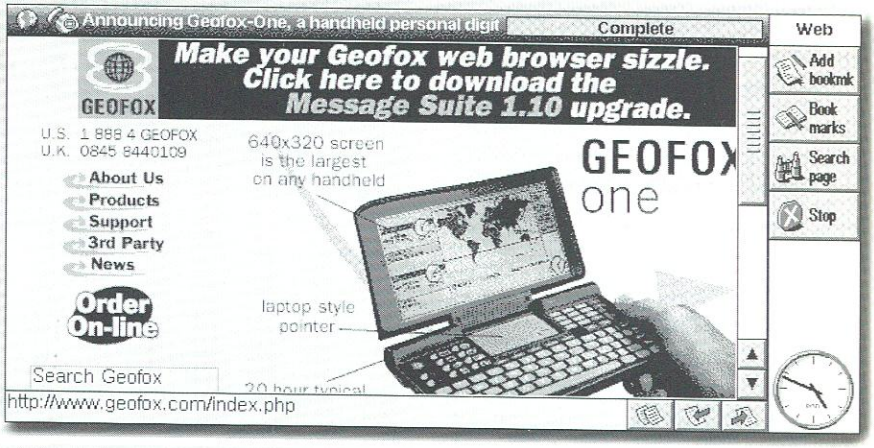
The whole process of emailing and web browsing is made considerably easier with the Geofox One's big tall screen, and it's nice to see one third more text on screen than the Series 5 when composing your emails. All the above factors make the Geofox the obvious choice for an Internet palmtop, and if Geofox develop a machine with colour display it should be unbeatable, though with such a huge screen area, battery life may be a major problem until colour screen technology improves (see our CeBIT report on page 9).

New Software

Don't feel left out with the new PsiWin 2.1 and Message Suite 1.1 announced by Psion. You can get Geofox's own version of PsiWin 2.1 and the new Message Suite directly from Geofox's web site. See page 18 for a more in depth look at PsiWin 2.1.

Better browsing

The new Message Suite has a few bug fixes and improvements, most notably the optional sixteen greyscale setting for web browsing. This makes graphical images and photos much easier to view than the old four greyscale mode, despite using more battery power and slowing down access a little when enabled. To set this new mode select 'View preferences...' from the 'Tools' menu and set 'Number of greys' to 'High' from within the 'Colour' tab.



Big screen web browsing in sixteen shades of grey!

Tech-Topics

Getting to grips with DATA files in OPL32 - Part 1

by Leigh Edwards

While lurking around the net it became obvious to me that a lot of questions were arising from the changes in the Series 5 DATA application and from the issue of OPL32 database programming. So here is my attempt to shed some light on the topic. My research soon revealed that it's a big subject with many different aspects, so it will take a couple of issues to do justice to the questions raised.

In the name of progress

The DATA application on Series 3 systems could only handle string data. However, the DATA application on the Series 5 is based on the EPOC32 DBMS (DataBase Management System) and a richer set of field types are available, i.e. Text (1-250), Number (-999,999,745 to 1,000,000,000), Floating point (-999,999,745 to 1,000,000,000—to 50 decimal places), Date (years from 0 to 2200), Boolean (Yes/no) and Memo (2GB with 16 memos maximum). The Series 5 DATA application also has the ability to embed objects such as graphics, documents, etc. within record fields.

A file created by DATA (Series 3) can be read and modified in OPL16 (and vice versa) as long as all fields are treated as strings. However, OPL16 can create databases with four field types, i.e. String, Integer, Float and Long Integer. DATA on the Series 3 systems can not be used with the majority of OPL16 databases. Fortunately, JBDATA (freeware from John Boyce) is an excellent alternative to DATA and is able to handle any databases created by OPL16. JBDATA is great for inspecting and setting up databases for subsequent use with OPL16 applications.

Time for a change

OPL32 database programmers have the same field types as in OPL16 and can operate according to the same programming model used with OPL16. Very

little has been taken away from the Series 5 OPL database functions (just RECSIZE, COMPRESS and ODBINFO), but a lot has been added, so adopting the new OPL32 database programming model is strongly recommended. More of that later.

There's even more

Series 5 programmers working in C++ have access to an even greater variety of field types, with a wider range of values than OPL32 or the DATA application. Available field types are Boolean (single bit); 8-bit, 16-bit and 32-bit unsigned integers; 8-bit, 16-bit, 32-bit and 64-bit signed integers; 32-bit and 64-bit floating point values; date/time values; short (255 characters) ASCII or UNICODE text; short (255 bytes) untyped data; long (2GB) of ASCII or UNICODE text; long binary (2GB) of untyped data. The UNICODE alternatives are provided for language text (such as Japanese) where there are thousands of characters, and hence greatly exceed the scope of the ASCII character set. In 8-bit ASCII, text up to 256 characters can be represented, while 16-bit UNICODE text allows for up to 65,536 characters.

The DBMS in EPOC32 is quite a sophisticated animal; it's altogether more comprehensive than any database facilities available on earlier Psion systems. For example, it supports a subset of SQL (Structured Query Language), multi-key indexes and transactions—facilities not normally associated with palmtop computers.

Files and their formats

Files created by DATA on Series 3 machines can be converted to the Series 5 DATA format with PsiWin 2. Unfortunately, this does not apply to OPL16 database files. The easiest conversion route I'm aware of is to use JBDATA to export the file into a comma delimited text format, transfer the file to a Series 5 and use the 'Import text file' option from the 'File|More' menu in DATA. This process is not infallible though, as some records in files containing numeric fields may return spurious values (when accessed from OPL32) for number fields that were unfilled during the import process. I understand this is a problem with OPL32, not the DATA application or the EPOC32 DBMS itself.

Hidden depths

DATA files created by the Series 5 application can be opened by OPL32 programs, but the files are only accessible for reading—any attempt to write to the file will cause an error. For every user-defined field in a DATA database the application will create a paired hidden binary field. The binary field holds any formatting information, embedded objects, etc. Since OPL32 doesn't support rich text or binary objects (i.e. embedded data), modification of DATA files from OPL32 is not

currently possible. If full read/write access is required, an OPL program can copy the DATA application records into a new database file created by OPL32.

For example, to open a DATA application database that contains one string field that you require, you could use:

```
OPEN "file",a,a$
```

Integer fields in the DATA application file correspond to long integer fields in OPL32. Any field types not supported by OPL will be ignored. The types and order of the OPL field handles must match those in the DATA file. For example, if the DATA application file 'MyData' contains:

Long integer field
Date/time field
String field
Floating point field

In OPL16 style you could access the supported field types using:

```
OPEN "MyData",A,f1&,f2$,f3
```

OPL32 will simply ignore the date/time field.

SQL it

However, it would be better to use the OPL32 SQL SELECT clause to name each of the required DATA file fields explicitly. This method requires knowledge of the table name and the field names as used by DATA. By default, all files created by DATA contain a single table called Table1 and the field names follow the scheme 'ColA1', 'ColA2', 'ColA3', etc. So, with the field types from the previous example, the DATA file could be opened using:

```
OPEN "MyData SELECT ColA1,
ColA3,ColA4 FROM Table1",a,
f1&,f2$,f3
```

i.e. deliberately skipping the date/time field.

However, beware that the new syntax doesn't always work with defaults. Sometimes the column labels will not conform to the `ColA1, ColA2...` scheme, i.e. if the DATA file labels/fields have been edited. In one of my DATA files (with only three fields) the column labels were actually `ColA12, ColA13` and `ColA18`!

So using * to SELECT all fields works well and is easier, e.g.

```
OPEN "MyData SELECT * FROM
Table1",a,f1&,f1$,f3
```

Changing your outlook

In OPL16, database files contained a single table consisting of data records with up to 32 fields. OPL32 database files can contain more than one table, and the field names and table names are also stored in the database. If a table name is not specified when creating a new database it will default to 'Table1'. Thus an OPL32 database can be a collection of related data tables, each with their own set of fields.

It is possible to open multiple tables, or several 'views' on a particular table, and

to select specific fields to be included in the view. The tables or table views opened are each identified by a logical view name (or logical filename). In OPL16 four open files were allowed simultaneously (with identifiers A-D). OPL32 supports up to 26 tables or table views (with identifiers A-Z).

Indexes can be constructed on a table using a key from a single field or using a combination of several fields to form a complex key. Multi-part keys are invaluable for situations where several records may have the same primary key (e.g. surname) and you wish to further order the retrieved records by a secondary key (e.g. first name).

Apart from presenting ordered record access, indexes provide major speed improvements when opening a table or table view. For the best possible database update speeds it is also necessary to make use of the new OPL32 transaction facilities.

Useful extensions

The facilities for creating keys, for building indexes, getting field information and many other tasks are provided by the functions in DATABASE.OPX, supplied as standard. A supplementary OPX called SYSRAM1.OPX has been made available by Psion Software PLC to provide some extra functions missing from the original Series 5 OPXs and fix a couple of bugs. Of particular note are two functions to replace the standard OPL32 FIND and FINDFIELD commands that can cause errors when used with database files with large strings, or with tables containing many fields. The replacement functions are:

```
DbFind&:(string$)
```

and

```
DbFindField&:(string$,start&,
num&,flags&)
```

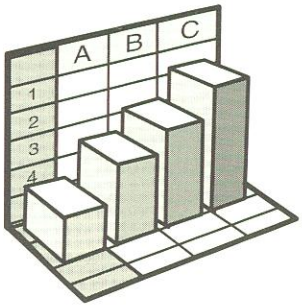
For best reliability, I recommend that you use these two OPX functions instead of FIND and FINDFIELD. SYSRAM1.OPX is available for download from the OPL32 programming section of the 3-Lib web site (*3lib.ukonline.co.uk/opl32.htm*).

Keep in trim

Some people have expressed alarm at apparently large increases in file sizes after only a moderate amount of operations on OPL32 databases. Compression of databases (on RAM or SRAM drives) was automatic in OPL16, on closing the database file. In OPL32 the COMPRESS keyword has been replaced with COMPACT. Automatic database compression can be enabled via the OPL32 SETFLAGS command (on closing the file) or by explicit use of the COMPACT keyword to keep the database file size in check.

In issue 18 I'll provide a complete OPL32 database example to illustrate all of the techniques discussed above and more, including how to read the actual field values and types from a DATA application file.

Working with SHEET



A series aimed at the relative beginner to the Psion's built-in programs—the sixth part of our tutorial designed primarily for 3a/3c/Siena users

by Steve Clack

Over the past five issues we've covered the rudiments of spreadsheet operation, from how to enter data into cells, how to format numbers and how to perform calculations. With the basics now in place, we'll examine a few more advanced functions.

Jumping around

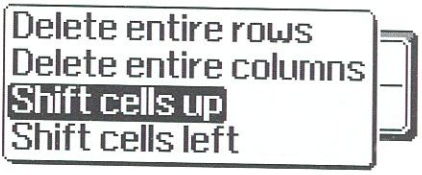
We've already looked at how to move to specific cells using the 'Jump to' command, but you can also traverse the screen more quickly by pressing the <Control> key together with the arrow keys. This moves the cursor one screenfull at a time. As we mentioned earlier in the series, cell naming is also an effective way to make spreadsheet navigation easier, and this was covered in our 'Name that cell!' article back in issue 1.

Insert and delete

Deleting the contents of single cells is simply a matter of pressing the <Delete> key with the cursor over the cell, but you can also use the <Shift> and arrow keys together to extend your selection. The selected cells always appear blacked out, and a single press of the <Delete> key will clear text, numbers or calculations from all the highlighted cells.

Sometimes you may wish to *delete* entire cells rather than just emptying their contents. To delete an entire row or column move the cursor to any cell within it, then press <Psion></> on a 3c or <Shift><Psion><O> on a 3a or Siena. To delete single cells or cell ranges, highlight them first using the <Shift> and arrow keys.

On the 3c you are presented with a dialog that gives the option to either delete the entire row or column, or to delete just the selected cells, shifting the adjacent cells upwards or to the left to fill the resulting gap.

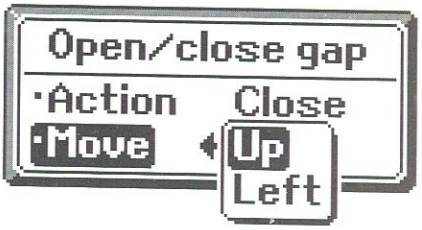


The 'Delete cells' menu on a Series 3c

On the Series 3a/Siena the 'Open/close gap' menu option appears instead of the 'Delete cells' option on the 3c. 'Open/close gap' allows additional cells or entire rows/columns to be inserted as well as deleted, a feature that was moved to a separate 'Insert cells' menu option on the 3c.

With all the above functions you can use the <Shift> and arrow keys together to extend your selection to more than one cell, row or column before deleting.

The above technique will remove *all* the data from the selected row(s) or column(s) without trace, move in the



'Open/close gap' on a 3a or Siena

rows or columns directly to the right or below to fill the space, and change their cell references accordingly. Don't worry that deleting or inserting cells will upset the cell references you've used in calculations—SHEET automatically readjusts everything to suit.

Recovering from mistakes

If you accidentally delete something you shouldn't have, or otherwise make a mess of your spreadsheet, it's always possible to undo the very last thing you did by pressing <Psion><U>. If the damage goes back further, the <Psion><V> 'Revert' option will take your sheet back to how it was the last time you saved it—just be sure that the last saved version requires less modifications than the one you have just messed up.

Keep it safe

Spreadsheets often carry sensitive financial information of either a personal or corporate nature, and are best kept safe in case your Psion is lost or stolen.

Simply set a password for individual spreadsheets with <Shift><Psion><W>. This prevents any casual access to your work and will deter all but the most persistent data thieves. As with all computer passwords you *cannot* access your information if you forget the password—so if you have several different passwords make absolutely sure you remember them all. In reality it should be quite safe to use the same password for all your documents—just be sure that it isn't an obvious one like your spouse's or dog's name, or the name of your favourite TV program.

Safe from yourself

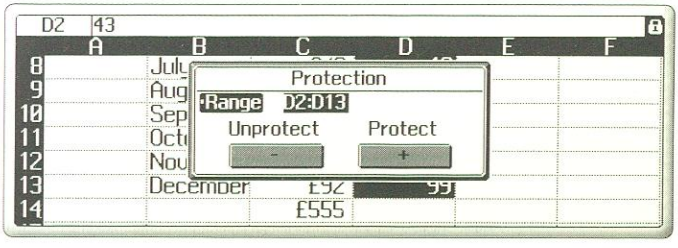
After putting a lot of work into an elaborate spreadsheet it's a good idea to save your work from accidental damage at *your own* hands. It's all too easy to accidentally overwrite important formulae or data with an errant keypress, and SHEET helps to guard against this with the 'Protection' menu option.

To protect a single cell, group of cells or even an entire sheet against modification you need to select the cell range in the usual way (the shift and arrow keys) press <Psion><+> on a 3a/3c or <Psion> and the '>' key if using a Siena. This invokes a dialog box (see bottom of page) from where you can re-enter a different cell range and press <+> to prevent the cells from being edited. You can subsequently unprotect cells by selecting them, bringing up the dialog again, and pressing <->. Whenever you move the cursor over protected cells a small 'padlock' icon appears in the top right corner of the screen to show that you cannot make any changes.

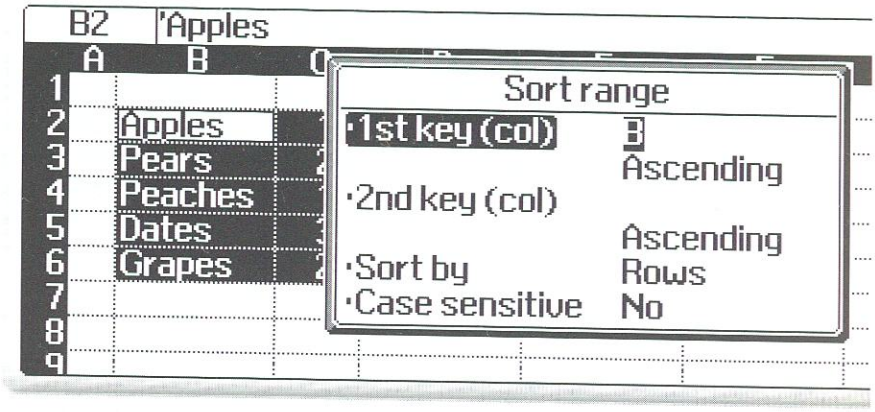
If you have protected many or all of the cells in a sheet you can quickly make changes without upsetting all your protection settings. Just go to the 'Set preferences' menu option and switch 'Override protection' to 'Yes'—just be sure that you set it back again as soon as you have finished editing.

A good sort

One area where the Series 3a/3c SHEET excels over the Series 5 equivalent is in data sorting. This can be useful if, for instance, you wish to keep a list of items in alphabetical order, or if you need to sort a range of numbers in either ascending or descending sequence.



Selecting cells for protection, and showing the small padlock icon to indicate previousiy protected cells

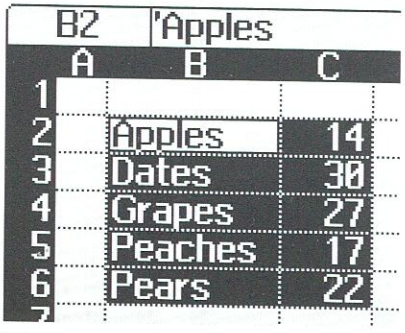


A list of items, unsorted and highlighted, ready to be sorted

To sort a range of cells highlight them first, then press <Shift><Psion><S> to bring up the sort dialog. Make sure that the '1st key (col)' is set to the column you wish to sort by ('B' in the example above, to sort by the fruit names rather than the numbers), select a second column to sort by if you have multiple columns (e.g. surname, middle initials and first name), and decide whether you want to sort in ascending order (A-Z and 0-9) or descending (Z-A and 9-0). You may occasionally wish to sort by columns instead of rows, and even make the sort case-sensitive by sorting 'A' and 'B' before 'a' and 'b'. You can do all this from the one dialog, so try a little experimenting to get the hang of how everything works.

The key thing to remember when sorting is to highlight *all* the cells you wish to sort *together*. A common mistake made by beginners is to highlight a column of numbers and sort them into order, forgetting to select the headings in the column next to them. This puts the data out of order relative to the headings, leaving your spreadsheet in a complete mess.

In the final instalment in the next issue we'll close with a look at the various printing options and a few other tricks for spreadsheet users.



Sorted by column B

"On The Net"

The latest gossip from Psion's online community

Pete Sipple browses the online chatter groups frequented by Psion users to see what's new. Topics that have caught his eye this time include faxing from your 5, submergible Psions, the Euro, and an old friend...

I've got the power

Always a favourite subject in the newsgroups—battery life. An interesting point was raised recently: how long does your Psion sit there waiting for you to input something?

"The batteries of my Psion Series 5 last only a maximum of 10 hours. I get a low battery warning after 2-5 hours on alkaline batteries. Does anyone know what the problem is?" *(idsunde@online.no)*

"Are you using the backlight a lot, or something? If not then you should be getting over 20 hours." *(jeremy@spam.demon.co.uk)*

"With an average battery current of 50mA, I guess you let your S5 turn itself off a lot. When the CPU is doing any processing my battery drain rises to 90-110mA (calculating routes on En Route for instance). And since I am using my S5 while it's turned on and then turn it off after I have finished using it, my average battery drain is about 75-85mA. (I don't let it just sit there doing nothing). My last set of Duracells lasted for about 17 hours, with a battery warning after about 7 hours. So, a better question would appear to be 'How long do the batteries last when you're USING your S5?' which is of course why Psion gave us a 'mA' and a 'time' reading." *(9bb07@dial.pipex.com)*

"You should set the communication option in the Extra menu to 'Off', except, of course, when using the cable or the IR port." *(suer@westbrabamt.net)*

"The link only consumes about 2mA extra, which isn't very significant and won't cause batteries to die in such a short time." *(martinkwel@aol.com)*

Give me the fax

Faxing from your Series 5. It should be easy to do, but how does it compare to

Psion's earlier fax software for the Series 3 range?

"Has anyone been able to fax from their S5? If so, how?" *(graham@aston.demon.co.uk)*

"You need: 1) A modem, 2) Some faxing software (either EasyFax or the Message Suite), and 3) a phone line. Isn't it amazing what computers can do these days?" *(ajai@ibm.net)*

"You should download the latest version of Message Suite from the Psion web site." *(ali-manson@psion.com)*

"Is EasyFax better than the Mickey Mouse faxing on Message Suite? I used to own the fax software for my Psion 3a and it seems a whole world ahead of Message Suite." *(brobin@brobin.demon.co.uk)*

"Some background. One of the major complaints about 3Fax for the Series 3 range was that it was hugely over-specified and contained large amounts of functionality that nobody used. With EasyFax and Message Suite the firm emphasis has been on 'back-to-basics' and a very, very easy to use application. I'd say that it meets these requirements head on." *(ali-manson@psion.com)*

"My one major criticism is that if you print to fax from an application, say WORD, then you appear to have no choice other than having a header sheet as well. Good for the telecom companies, not so good for the users." *(cornelius@vercor.demon.co.uk)*

"I really miss being able to put my own logo on the fax cover sheet, which is so much easier to spot than the very standard Series 5 effort." *(rachael@jswallow.demon.co.uk)*

A Question of currency

A single European currency is on the way, but can Psions cope with its symbol?

"Does anybody know if Psion have plans to update the character set for their machines to add the symbol for the Euro to the characters it can display?" *(rregal@cix.co.uk)*

"There is now an officially agreed symbol for the Euro: it looks something like a capital 'C' with 2 short horizontal lines through the middle. I've heard that Microsoft have now released at least one font for Word 97 including it, but I don't know which. That said, just think of all those fonts, PC keyboards, etc., which will have to be changed, let alone Psions. Why couldn't they have left it as E, Eu or EUR?" *(rgibby@cix.co.uk)*

"The Euro is a new currency, introduced in an age of electronic communication. I can see little point in giving it a symbol that most computers won't display correctly. Most of the EU uses two letter abbreviations for currency." *(jljones@cix.co.uk)*

"As I have learned to my chagrin, the Psion character set is not entirely compatible anyway. Your 'pound sign'

comes out as a 'u acute', your apostrophes are a capital A and E joined together, or lower case for open speech marks! We're gonna have fun with the Euro sign! *(slangdon@cix.co.uk)*

Quick, Psion?

Last year, Psion promised us a version of the Quicken banking package for the Series 5, but it's now been consigned to oblivion. Software of this type is sometimes labelled 'vapourware'. So, what's the story?

"Pocket Quicken—where is it? Having been told that I would have to wait until: Oct 97, Dec 97, Feb 98, Early 98, Spring 98. All references seem to have vanished from the Psion website. Does anyone know what is going on?" *(watts_andy@jpmorgan.com)*

"Palmtop BV is now speaking of Money 5. I think it's just another name." *(arjan@pobox.com)*

"This morning, Psion Technical Support said that they had dropped the Psion Money package for the 3a/3c about two weeks ago. They were going to replace it with a Psion Quicken product." *(ameban@acm.org)*

"Pocket Quicken has been dropped due to licensing issues. Instead, a version of Psion Money (Quicken compatible, if I recall) is under development by Palmtop BV." *(nicko@nildram.co.uk)*

(see page 7 for more details on the fate of Quicken - Ed.)

Drip dry Psi?

A few issues back, we looked at some cases of battered and bruised Psions and the need to take care. Judging from these examples, maybe there's a market for a watertight model?

"Mine had a pint of Guinness poured into it via the keyboard..."

"Have any of you ever had a very wet S5? Bit of an accident today—S5 got completely submerged in water. What are the chances of getting it working again after thorough drying out?" *(rtpoole@cix.co.uk)*

"Provided you removed the batteries—main and backup—fairly quickly and the water was clean, probably quite good. Just let it dry out very thoroughly." *(panflet@cix.co.uk)*

"Mine had a pint of Guinness poured into it via the keyboard and over the screen (don't ask!) I removed all the batteries, washed it thoroughly in cold

water and left it for a couple of days to dry out and it's been fine ever since." *(stevegodfrey@cix.co.uk)*

"Some advice I was offered way back was to put the doused article in the airing cupboard, but to make sure that I turned it over regularly to ensure that any 'trapped' water escaped. This used to be the cure for cameras that had been in the sea too—straight into distilled water several times and then a long slow dry." *(juggie@cix.co.uk)*

"Mine had a glass of water thrown over it—wouldn't switch on for a few hours, but it was working fine within a day, although odd bytes of the internal memory were corrupted. I was SO glad I'd taken a backup the night before! Paul Pinnock told me, when he serviced the machine and recognised the water residue, that tap water is the worst liquid you can spill, as it leaves minerals and stuff behind." *(gidds@cix.co.uk)*

"The trouble with liquid entry into machines is that even if you dry it out, you can find that although it works fine for a month, it suddenly stops working and has to be written off. This is especially true with red wine, which tends to have a slow corrosive action. To be sure, it's best to get an engineer to dismantle the thing entirely and give it a proper wash and dry off internally. Residual spillage eats electronics away slowly." *(jezar@cix.co.uk)*

"Much the same as me really. If I douse myself in Guinness, including getting my insides damp, I'm usually fine after a thorough wash in cold water and a couple of days of inactivity." *(millar@cix.co.uk)*

"Have you also tried sitting in an airing cupboard?" *(ioliver@cix.co.uk)*

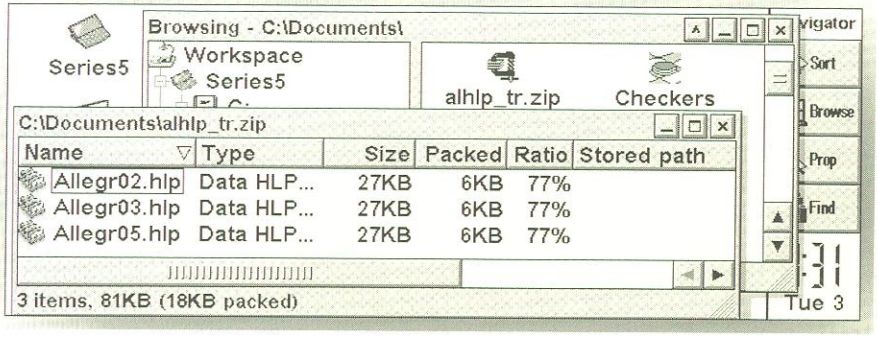
"Thanks for those responses—they gave me a little more confidence. Here's the update. I was filled with remorse on reading that all the batteries should be removed—somehow I forgot about the backup. Nevertheless, I placed the S5 in the airing cupboard for a couple of hours. When I finally took it out and inserted batteries, the machine went through the hard reset routine to my delight! However, the machine now cannot see the presence of the backup battery. (I put in a new one to be on the safe side), nor does it recognise full capacity of new main batteries." *(rtpoole@ cix.co.uk)*

Psion related discussions take place in several Usenet newsgroups including comp.sys.psion.misc, as well as the Psion conference on CiX, the Psion area on AOL, and the Psion forum on CompuServe.

Pete Sipple

WIN a copy of Navigator!

Just answer the following questions relating to the contents of this issue, and mail your answers to the usual *Palmtop* address. One correct entry picked out at random on 20th May will receive the prize. If you don't want a copy of Navigator then you can choose another prize of equivalent value from our special selection.



Question 1 - What forthcoming software will enable easy Internet connection via a GSM telephone?

Question 2 - What long-awaited software package has recently been withdrawn from release?

Question 3 - What Psion carrying case sounds like the name of a large animal?

Last issue's competition winner was Elizabeth Liddell of Turriff, Aberdeenshire

The competition answers were: 110,000, Rob Edwards, and ADPCM

Hints & Tips

Every item published in this section wins a FREE _Palmtop_ tee shirt!

Keep your preferences

Extras bar preferences on a Series 5 are saved if you set them from the control panel—if you set them directly via the extras bar itself (by tapping the grey bar on the left) they get lost after a soft reset. If you do make any changes via the extras bar, go to the control panel, bring up the extras bar item and press <Enter> without changing anything, and it will save the current setup.

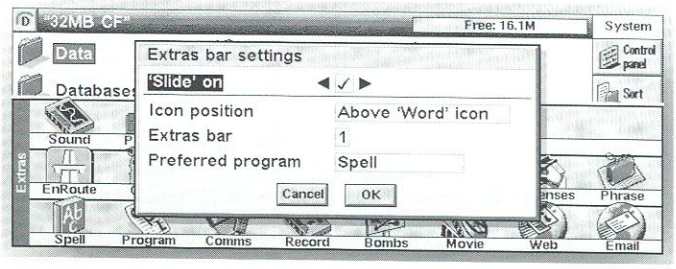
John Durridge
Hartford, Connecticut, USA

Killing applications

If a 3a/3c application is misbehaving you can usually force it to shut down by pressing <Psion><Esc>. If this doesn't work (e.g. in built-in applications, or because the software author has cancelled this feature) you can 'kill' it from *within* the program by pressing <Shift><Control><Psion><K>. A similar action is carried out by highlighting the program/file on the system screen and pressing <Shift><Psion><K>. DO NOT press <Shift><Control><Psion><K> from the system screen as this causes a soft reset!

All of the above techniques will lose any data that has not been saved.

Gareth Wild
Rochdale, Lancashire



Set your extras bar preferences from the control panel, not from the extras bar itself

Series 5 time synch

Now you can keep your Series 5 internal clock updated with the precise time—automatically. This is done via your PC through the Internet.

Simply download the shareware program SocketWatch.zip from

http://www.locutuscodeware.com/

and run it on your PC. Set PsiWin 2 to automatically synchronise your PC and Psion clocks at connection (to do this, right click on the 'My Psion' icon and choose 'Properties', then 'Connections' and check the 'Synchronise PC and Psion clocks at connection' box).

Now every time you connect to the Internet, your PC clock will be updated automatically from worldwide time servers, and when you connect your Psion, it too will know the time as accurately as Big Ben!

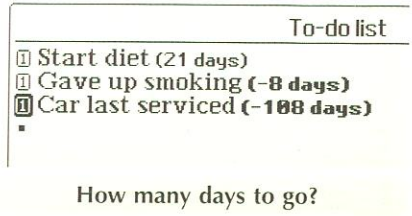
Trevor Tyrrell
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

Counting the days

A useful way to measure the days left until an important date (a family wedding, a change of job, etc.) or the number of days since an important event occurred (when you gave up smoking, started your diet, last serviced the car, etc.) is to use the 'To-do' view of your AGENDA.

On a Series 3a/3c/Siena, select a current To-do list, or better still, create a new one. Next, type in the entry, for example 'Alpha project deadline'. Press <Enter>, and you will be presented with the to-do details dialog box. Then follow these steps:

- At the 'Dated' line change the setting to 'Yes'.
- Enter your relevant date on the 'Due date' line.
- Go to the 'Date details...' line and press <Tab>. This will bring up a further dialog box. The 'Warning from' line will show the date you entered a moment ago. If your relevant date is in the past, leave this date as it is. If your relevant date is in the future, then you can still leave it as it is, but the entry will only appear in the AGENDA view on that date. If you wish it to appear whenever today is selected, you will have to change this date to one prior to today. Alternatively just set a number in the 'Days warning' box that makes the warning appear a sufficient number of days before the event.
- Go to the 'Show due date as' line and change it to 'Days'. This forces



AGENDA to display a count of the days before the event is due.

- Press <Enter> twice to remove the dialog boxes.

The entry will now show how many days are left until your relevant date, or show a negative number to indicate how many days have elapsed since a past event, and will update itself automatically every day.

By adjusting to-do list settings you can either limit the entry to appear just in the to-do view, or have it appear on today's date in the AGENDA view.

You can perform a similar function on the Series 5 by selecting the 'More...' button while editing your to-do and setting the same parameters from the 'Date' tab.

By doing all this you can have a useful list that automatically keeps itself up-to-date showing the number of days left or that have passed between various events and the current date.

Jonathan Thomas
Maidstone, Kent

Calculator memories

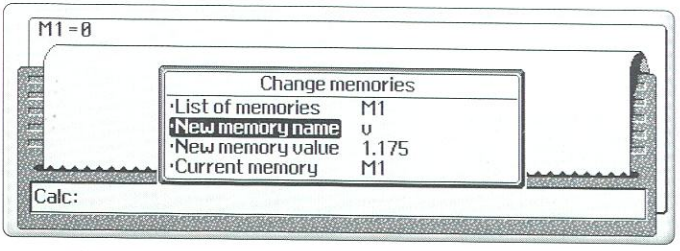
Don't forget that if you have any *constant* values that you use regularly in CALC then you can enter them into the calculator memories for quick and easy recall. Series 3a/3c/Siena CALC has 10 memories that you can assign names or code letters to, and the Series 5 has 26 labelled A-Z when used in scientific mode (but only one in desk mode).

If, for instance you regularly need to add VAT at 17.5%, just assign the value 1.175 to one of the memories (use memory 'V' on a Series 5, or just rename one of the memories to 'V' or 'v' if you are using a Series 3). You can then add VAT to a figure by entering '<number>*V' (or '<number>*v').

Brian Daily
Polperro, Cornwall

Short on memory?

If you are running short of internal memory on your 3a/3c or Siena then remember that all installed applications take a few kilobytes of memory just by appearing on the system screen—even more if you have custom-designed icons. If things are getting really tight



Assign your CALC memories to frequently used constants...

then you can temporarily remove the icons for programs you're not using.

Ewan Spence
Cowdenbeath

Q&A

Q I used to use the 'Save as template' feature in WORD to create skeleton letters and fill-in forms on my Series 3a. The Series 5 has no such template function, so how is there any way around this limitation?

Jayne Fitzpatrick
Anglesey, Wales

A This, together with outlining and integrated use of the thesaurus is one of the important features that Psion inexplicably missed out of the Series 5—at least in the 1.00 and 1.01 ROM versions. Let's hope that all these limitations are addressed in the forthcoming ROM version 1.1 due out this summer.

In the meantime you can get around the lack of templates with the following method:

- Create your skeleton document in the same way as you would prepare any other template, and save the file with a descriptive name, like 'Letter Template' in a separate folder. Name the folder as something like 'Templates', and put it in the top level of your filing system.
- Highlight the icon for the template file you have created, then press <Psion><P> to bring up the 'Properties' dialog. Tap the 'Read-only' box so that it is ticked. This will prevent the file from being accidentally overwritten.
- The next time you want to create a document using this template, go to your 'Templates' folder, tap on the file you want and open it. You will not be able to modify the file until you have first re-saved it with another name (using 'Save as...'), remembering to put it in your usual documents folder rather than the 'Templates' folder. The new document will automatically be saved with 'Read-only' switched off.

This technique will keep your template unchanged for future use.

If you want something a little more sophisticated then you may wish to try out John McAleely's freeware StationeryPad software. You can get the latest version from *www.mcaleely.com/* or from the *Palmtop* CD.

Murgan's Musings

Stephen Murgan outlines a free alternative to personal finance software, together with a few ideas on how to forecast for the future

Like many of you, I use my Psion for keeping track of my accounts—it is so much better to be in control of your finances then to have them in control of you. Unlike many, however, I have done this with no extra software at all, just the 3c's built-in spreadsheet. This approach is not as powerful or flexible as using a purpose-built financial package, but if your affairs are simple then it may be sufficient for your needs. If, on the other hand, you have multiple bank accounts or multiple credit cards (a bad idea, in my opinion) or if you have a specific need for the functions of a financial package (like net worth or compound interest calculation), you should consider taking that route. For most of us, however, a spreadsheet-based solution should be sufficient. I keep track of two bank accounts and a credit card in this way with ease.

The key to this and any other method of tracking your accounts is to stay on top of everything. If you make a purchase and forget to enter it then you will have an unpleasant surprise when you get your bank statement. That's where the portability of a palmtop machine really shines: entering the information is so easy that it can be done at the point of the transaction. Do it right, and the only surprises you will get are pleasant ones.

The Bank Spreadsheet

The spreadsheet I use for my bank account is designed to look like a bank statement, with columns for Description, Debit, Credit, Balance and Date cleared. There is also support for a linked savings account—more on that later. When the statement arrives I simply check that the items match, delete them from the spreadsheet and update the initial balance on the spreadsheet with the closing balance on the statement.

The spreadsheet is divided into three sections: past (cleared transactions), present (uncleared or outstanding transactions) and future (expense estimates). The expense estimates are: this month's remaining transactions, next month's transactions, and summary numbers for the months following, with miscellaneous expenses (yearly expenses and one-off purchases) added in right at the bottom.

Getting Started

Getting the spreadsheet up and running takes a little effort, but the subsequent maintenance effort is minimal—about five minutes each month to reconcile the sheet against a statement and a few seconds to log each transaction as it happens.

The spreadsheet is a simple one. I will be happy to email a copy to anyone who wants one (*murgan@bellsouth.net*), but it's quite easy to set up a suitable spreadsheet yourself from the following instructions:

The first thing to do is to get your current balance from your bank and enter it into cell D1. This is your starting point on which future calculations will be based. Allow some spare rows at the top for cleared entries, then enter any pending transactions such as uncleared cheques, withdrawals or deposits. Enter the amount in column B if it is a credit or C for a debit.

Many banks offer a no-cost method of getting both your balance and recent transactions down the phone or over the counter (I find it hard to believe that so many banks actually charge you to find out how much of your money they are currently holding). Use this information to determine which entries have cleared, then move them up into the 'cleared' area at the top.

One easy way to split out the cleared transactions is to enter the date in column E, then select all the pending transactions and sort by that column (this won't work on the Series 5, which has no sort function at present). The cleared transactions will then be in a sorted block which can be moved to the top of the sheet, leaving the uncleared ones behind.

As time goes by, you will soon build up a sizeable chunk of cleared transactions. When the statement comes in, it is a relatively painless matter to check off their records against yours as they will be in an almost identical order. When you are satisfied that all is as it should be, you can remove the transactions from the spreadsheet and insert the new starting balance in cell D1. Before you wipe them, however, copy your regular monthly expenses as a block to give you a starting point for next month's expenses, and add in any specific bills you are expecting next month. Now we are starting to forecast.

Looking to the Future

From here it is relatively easy to arrive at a forecast of your changing fortunes over the next three months. Don't forget to add in those annual bills, such as insurance premiums and estimated holiday and Christmas expenses. Armed with this information, you can set goals and have money available when it is needed. It also helps to work out those "Can I afford this?" questions.

I have a few additional hints to offer. Firstly, it pays to be pessimistic. If you have variable bills (electricity, telephone, etc.) *overestimate* them—that way any surprises will be pleasant ones. Secondly, lots of little cash withdrawals throughout the month will complicate your forecast, so estimate your total cash withdrawals for the month and total them up in weekly or monthly withdrawals. Again, make sure that you paint a worst-case scenario.

Finally, don't forget to put down the amount of your credit-card bill (it might be an idea to total this up in a separate spreadsheet), and insert the total in here. Logging your credit card payments also has an extra benefit. By knowing what to expect, you can easily spot payments that do not belong there and dispute them if necessary. This is a simple but effective weapon in the battle against credit card fraud.

You may have a savings account linked to your current account (or 'checking account' as they call it here in the USA—maybe because you have to keep 'checking' that the bank has not erred in their favour?), and this is where columns G and H come into play. Enter the starting savings balance in H1. Transferring money into savings should be treated as a withdrawal from the main account while taking money out should be logged as a deposit. The only difference is that for transfers you should put a 1 in column G. Column H will 'sense' that this is a transfer, and give you a running balance. You will just have to take a little extra care with your month-end processing in clearing out column G. Once again, the interest is a pleasant surprise when the statement comes in.

Some of you may think that this is something of an extraordinary effort to control one's finances. I don't agree. The initial setup was a couple of hours over a two-month period, followed by a minimal overhead on a continuous basis. It sounds more difficult than it actually is. I estimate that this approach has saved me about £20 per month—£240 per year—in avoided interest, charges and penalties. On top of that it has helped me to detect bank errors, always in their favour, to the tune of another (say) £30 per year.

As far as using my Psion is concerned, I admit to going overboard (many of us do). As well as a spreadsheet for my bank account, I have one for my (few) credit-card expenses, another for tracking miscellaneous expenses, yet another for listing tax-deductibles—but that is another story for another time.

The Psion Reference

If you would like to be considered for inclusion in this ever-expanding directory then please send details directly to *Palmtop*. If your entry is incomplete or incorrect then please update us!

Discussion Groups

UseNet Groups

comp.sys.psion.announce *comp.sys.psion.apps* *comp.sys.psion.marketplace*
comp.sys.psion.misc *comp.sys.psion.programmer* *comp.sys.psion.reviews*
comp.sys.psion.comm

CompuServe Psion discussion	GO PSION
CiX Psion conference	join psion
AOL - Psion Noticeboard	Psion/General noticeboard - Keyword: Psion
Series 5 mailing list	Fill in form on *www.pinkworks.com/pda/s5list.html*

Psion Software

New World Technology Site	*www.nwt.com/shareware*
Cityscape Psion Archive	*ftp://ftp.cityscape.co.uk/pub/psion/*

Usenet Binary Group	*comp.binaries.psion*
CompuServe	GO PSION
CiX	'join psion', then look in '/files' and 'Series 5_files' file lists

Psion FAQ

The Frequently Asked Questions document contains useful information, facts, names, addresses and numbers:

Posted monthly to the *comp.sys.psion.announce* newsgroup.

Available for FTP download from *news.answers* FTP sites, including rtfm.mit.edu/pub/usenet/news.answers/psion-faq/

An online version can be accessed from: http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/8130/faq.htm

Available by e-mail. Send an e-mail message to mail-server@rtfm.mit.edu with a message containing the lines "send usenet/news.answers/psion-faq/*" to receive all parts or send a message containing "help" and "index" for more information.

World Wide Web sites

Psion PLC	*www.psion.com*
Psion Software	*www.software.psion.com*
Palmtop magazine	*www.palmtop.co.uk*
3-Lib shareware	*3lib.ukonline.co.uk*
3-Lib (USA and non-UK Europe)	*3lib.mobile.be*
Total S5!	*ady.net/psion/*
Softbase Series 5 information	*www.softbase.co.uk/psion/*
5 Alive!	*www.5alive.ndirect.co.uk/*
PsiIDB	*www.psion.co.at/psiidb.phtm*
Palmscape	*www.palmscape.com*

The Software Directory

Machine key: 3=Series 3, a=Series 3a, c=Series 3c, s=Siena, 5=Series 5/Geofox One

'Issue' denotes which issue(s) of Palmtop contains reviews or material on each product.

Programs priced at £20 or less are almost always shareware, and those above £20 are usually commercial software.

Name	Description	Runs on	Author	Issue	Price
Business					
5Time	Time logger	5	Simon Berridge		$20
Act!	Contact manager	a/c	Psion	4,5	£90
BusCalc	Business calculations (ROAE etc)	a/c	Chris Nicholson		£12
Colleague	Phone contact manager	a/c/s	Ad Bosch		Free
Contact!	Contact Manager	5	Tim Richardson		£20
Contact Edge	Contact Manager	a/c	Ad Bosch	5,10	Free
Contact Log	Contact Logger/Organiser	a/c	Paul Law	14	£12
Decide	Decision analysis utility	a/c	Dave Catlin		£10
Dialler	Call manager and logger	5	Tony Crocker		£8
Facsman	Facilities Management	a/c/s	Gary Bainbridge	11	£15
Invoice Manager	Invoice allocations and construction in HTML	3	Marc de Oliveira		£5
Linkwise	Connect to Novell GroupWise	a/c/s	Advansys		A$99.50
Log-It!	Time and task logger	a/c	Mark Esposito		$29
Office Log	Office communications logging system	a/c	Estuary Technologies		£20
Plan	Project Manager	a/c/s/5	Andy Clarkson	4	£15
Presentation Maker	Slide-show creator	5	Psion	15	£50
ProPoc	Project Manager	a/c	Berthold Daum	7	A$99
Psi-Tact	Contact Manager	a/c/s	Tony Crocker	11,14	up to £15
Relate	Contact Manager	a/c/s	Ad Bosch		Free
RepPoc	Mailing list/Reporting aid	a/c	Berthold Daum		A$59
SaleTrax	Contacts Manager	a/c	Chris Nicholson		£12
TimeBase6	Time and Task planner	a/c	Widget	11	£50
TimePlan	Time and Task planner	5	Paul Law	15	£10
VacTrac	Vacation Planner	a/c	Ronald Queloz		Free
WorkLog	Time logger	a/c	Richard Schmidt		Free
Communications Software					
CixEd	Off-line-reader for CIX	5	Steve Litchfield		Free
Faxit	Fax sender	a/c	Walter Wright	15	£14
FreeVT	VT100 terminal emulator	a/c	Nils Faerber		Free
JBCIS	Addon to ReadCIS	a/c	Compuserve PSION forum	9,10	Free
Messaging Suite	Email and web browsing	5	Psion PLC	15	Free
NFSC	VT100 emulator and UNIX-Comms	a/c	R. Koenig		Free
Psion Dialer	Data add-on for travelers	3/a/c/s	Protronics USA		$25
PsiMail Internet	Email and web browsing	a/c	Psion PLC	7,10	£60
ReadCIS	Compuserve off-line access package	a/c	Compuserve PSION forum	1,7	$25/£16
ReadCIX	CIX comms package	a/c	CiX ReadCIX conference	1,2	Free

Name	Description	Runs on	Author	Issue	Price
SIU Fax	Fax receive on S3a	a/c	Exportech	15	£34
Swapper	Use multiple Message Suite accounts	5	Richard Stafford		£5
Termit	VT100 terminal emulator	a/c/s	Serge Shestopalov		£15
Conversion Packages					
Conversion Calculator	Conversion Package	a/c/s/5	Timothy Bentinck	10	£10
Convert	Conversion Package	3/a/c	Paul Synott	10	£8
Convert5(/Pro)	Conversion Package	5	Mayur Shah		£12
Convert 2.1	Conversion Package	a/c	Tom Nemec	10	$10
Convert 2	Conversion Package	a/c	Jon Duff	10	£10
Converti	Conversion Package	5	Guillaume Dupont		Free
Toolkit 1	Conversion, File Manager and other utilities	a/c	Purple Software	3,4,10	£40
Database Applications					
3Base	Psion-PC database convertor	PC/Windows/a/c	Palmtop BV		Free
DataImp (PBVideo)	Video/Music/Photo etc	a/c	Patrick Bell	6	£15
DataView (/Pro)	Database lister/browser/printer	a/c	Purple Software	2,5	£50?
DataDeLuxe	Database Application	a/c	Pocket & Soul	2	£50
JBData	Database browser/searcher	a/c	John Boyce	2,4,6	Free
Multivue	Business database system	a/c	The user group	2	£50
Pages Generator	Corporate database compression	a/c	Mobile Software	5,16	£100
File Managers					
3T	Simple File Manager	a/c/s/5	Roger Muggleton	10,12,16	Free
File Manager	Part of Toolkit 1	3/a/c/s	Purple Software	3,4,5	£40
Filer	File Manager	a/c	Tom Nemec	8	$30
JBTree	File Manager	a/c/s	John Boyce	4,12	Free
QV5	File browser and viewer	5	Roger Muggleton	16	Free
RShell	File manager	a/c	Konstantin Saliy	12	$25
SnFile/X3Tree	File Manager	s	Richard Wakelin	10	£10
Synchro	Files synchronization	a/c	Jean-Philippe Pasquier		$10
Finance Packages					
ABP	Bank account management	5	Malcolm Bryant	16,17	Free
Bank/BankPlus	Accounts Package	3/a/c/s/5	Pete Sipple	4,8,9,11,12	£5 to £8
Banker	Accounts Package	a/c	Pelican Software		£60
BILL 1.O	Calculates Bills	a/c/s	Tom McGaw		£6
DP Bank	Accounts Package	a/c/5	Daniel Pfund	8,10,12,16,17	£10
EasyBank/EasyExpense	Spreadsheet-based accounts suite	a/c/s	Phil Rosengarten		£10
Expense Manager	Expenses manager	5	Palmtop BV	16	£50
Expense Tracker	Expenses manager	a/c	Psion	10	£30
Finance Pack	Accounts Package	a/c	Widget Software	8	£50
Financial Advisor	Mortgage/Pension Calc	3/a/c/s	Gary Perlmutter	12	£7
Financial Calculator	Assorted financial calculations	a/c	Psion	16	£40
Financial Calculator	Assorted financial calculations	5	Palmtop BV	16	£50
HomeBank	Budget management and account prediction	5	Nigel Bamber	17	£10
Interest 1.0	Interest calculator	s	Thomas McGaw		£2
Money	Financial management and reporting system	5	Palmtop BV	17	£50
Porfolio	Investments manager	a/c/5	Guillaume Dupont		$30
Psion Money	Accounts Package	a/c	Psion plc	8	£50
S3ABank/S5Bank/SnaBank	Accounts Package	a/c/s/5	Alan Richey	4,8,9,11,16,17	$30
S3AExpenses/SnaExpenses	Expense Account Tracker	a/c/s	Alan Richey		$15
S3AFuel/SnaFuel/S5Fuel	Fuel Consumption Monitor	a/c/s/5	Alan Richey		$10

Name	Description	Runs on	Author	Issue	Price
S3AHome/SnaHome/S5H..	Home Inventory	a/c/s/5	Alan Richey		$10
S3AInvest/SnaInvest	Investment tracker	a/c/s	Alan Richey	8	$10
S3APlanner/SnaPlanner	Budget Planner	a/c/s	Alan Richey		$10
Shark A Tax	Tax assessment spreadsheet	a/c/s	Shark A Tax	13	£20
StockIt	Stock Control and Mark-up/down calculator	a/c	Chris Nicholson		£20
Xpenses/5Xpense	Expenses manager	a/c/5	Simon Berridge		$10
General Utilities					
Agenda Dump	Agenda reporting tool	a/c	Simon Pooley		Free
Alarm Enhancer	Better alarm control	a/c/s	Alan Clifford		£5
Alerts	Alert manager	a/c	Max Bisschop		Free
BackLite Plus	Backlight control and other utilities	5	Jason Kneen		£10
BusyView	Agenda Monthly View	a/c/s	Lieuwe de Vries	10	$25
CallCalc	Telephone call coster	a/c/5	Mark Avey		$15
DPSwitch	Task switcher (elimates need for Button bar)	a/c	Daniel Pfund		Free
Desktop utilities plus	Utility shell and system desktop	5	Paul Law	16	£12
EasyNote	Jotter	5	Paul Law		£10
Encrypt-It	File encryption tool	5	Peter Csutora	16	£7
GBattery	Battery Monitor	a/c	Max Bisschop	6	Free
Geoclock/SolarMap	World Daylight Map	a/c/5	John Davies	15	Free
HotKeys	Task cycler and shortcut package	5	Henry Hirst	15	£10
Info Centre	Document and Data management control	a/c	Chris Nicholson		£12
JB Active	Application Manager	a/c	John Boyce	11	Free
JB Backup	Backup Utility	a/c	John Boyce		Free
JB Dupes	Eliminates duplicate files	a/c	John Boyce	12	Free
JB Eyecon	Picture browser and viewer	a/c	John Boyce		Free
JB Find	File and file contents locator	a/c	John Boyce		Free
JB Launch	Launchpad for applications	a/c	John Boyce	6	Free
JB ResetM	Recover lost memory	a/c	John Boyce	11	Free
JB Sort	Database sorting	a/c	John Boyce		Free
JWIN	Information/utilities/conversions	a/c/s/5	Phil Spencer	10,15	£7
KbdMap	Keyboard remapper	3/a/c/s	Konstantin Saliy	8	DM40
LaunchPad	Application launcher	a/c/s	Phil Spencer	13	£5
MemoFind	Agenda add-on	a/c	FTP sites	3	Free
MemoPad	Jotter utility	a/c	Tristan Bonsall	12	£6.50
MonthVu	Agenda Add-on	a/c/s	Steuart Dewar		??
NoteIt	Prioritised note-taking system	5	Fabio Mossetti		Free
P-Info	Machine information	a/c	Alex Wilbur	14	$10
P-Shell	Command line utilities	a/c	Alex Wilbur		$18
Psi-Sync	Synchronises MS Outlook 97 with AGENDA	a/c/s	Brian Cadge		$26
PassApps	Agenda/Data password protection	a/c/s	Phil Spencer	8,9	£5
PsiZip/S5Zip	Archiving/dearchiving software	a/c/s/5	Serge Shestopalov	12,16	£15
Quick Alarm	Quick activation of predefined alarms	a/c/s	Brendan W. Breede		Free
Quick Note	Jotter	a/c/s	CE Steuart Dewar	5,6,12	$??
RPNCalc	Reverse Polish calculations	5	Derek Johnston		£10
S3A Task/S5 Task	Extended Task Manager	a/c/5	Alan Richey		$15
S3ACalc	Numeric keypad overlay/calculator application	a/c	John Crook	6	£12
S5 Note	Jotter	5	Alan Richey		£7
Siena Plus Pack	Utilities and more	s	Steve Litchfield	13	Free
Sleeper	Backlight controller	c	Mark Esposito	10	$18
SpaceHog	Displays the largest space hogging folders	5	Steve Litchfield		Free
StartUp	Document and task manager and launcher	5	Philipp Salvisberg		Free
Stationery Pad	Templating document manager	5	John McAleely		Free

Name	Description	Runs on	Author	Issue	Price
Stopwatch	Stopwatch	5	Dirk Roennau		Free
Stopwatch	10mS resolution Stopwatch	a/c	Simon Pooley		Free
Stopwatch!	Basic stopwatch	a/c	K McLoughlin		Free
TaskSwitcher	Windows-like task switcher	3/a/c/s	Jean-Phillipe Reynauld		$10
ThesLink	Hotkeyed entry into Thesaurus	5	Henry Hirst	15	Free
TimeMan	Time-related (and other) utilities	a/c	Phil Spencer	8,14	£10
Tone Pad	DTMF dialer/timer	a/c	Simon Pooley		Free
Toolkit 2	System and archiving tools	a/c	Purple Software	10	£40
Unzip	ZIP file decompressor	a/c/s	Jochen Siegenthaler	7	Free
Xapps	Password protection for Data and Agenda	a	Mark Esposito		Free
XtraLink	Extras bar alternative	5	Ad Bosch	17	Free
Graphics Packages					
Draw	Painting package	a/c	S Litchfield/Rick Andrews	3,8,10,12	£12
DrawIt/FloChart/OrgChart	Vector drawing package	a/c	Purple Software	1,3	£40
Icon Draw	Paint icons	a/c	Jon Duff		£10
MBMView	Sketch and MBM picture browser/viewer	5	Lieuwe de Vries	15	Free
P5CAD	Computer Aided Design	5	Andrew Duffield	17	??
Paint & Compose	Painting and Music composition	a/c	Widget Software	3	£40
Palmtop Picasso	Painting package	a/c	Ken Willan	3	£15
Photo5	Bitmap manipulation package	5	Mat Ripley		$20
PicPoc	Painting package	a/c	Berthold Daum		A$50
S3ADraw/SnaDraw	Icon/Picture Editor	a/c/s	Alan Richey		$15
Slide	Slide-show and demo system	a/c	Steve Litchfield		Free
Survey Master Graphique	CAD-like drawing creator for surveyors	a/c	Surveying Technology Ltd		??
Vector	Vector/CAD drawing	a/c	Nick Matthews	16	£15
HTML-related tools					
Websurf	Offline HTML browser	a/c	Arnaud Weil	7,8	£12
HTMLView	Offline HTML browser	a/c/s	Micro Cheng		$30
Macro Software					
ExAb	Macro set for expanding common abbreviations	a/c/5	Huub Linthorst	12	Free
F11	Document macro aids	a/c	Berthold Daum	12	A$20
KMAC	Macro Software	a/c	FTP sites		Free
MACSYS	Macro Software system	a/c	Tom Dolbilin	3,12	Free
Remapper	Silk screen and keyboard remapping software	5	Richard Reeve		Free
SwitchTask	Macro system and task switcher	5	Pascal Nicholas		Free
Miscellaneous applications					
Agenda Companion 1998	Notable dates add-on	a/c/5	On-Board-Info Ltd	11,15	Free
Allegro	Handwriting recognition	5	Purple Software	15,16	£50
Calc3a	Scientific calculator and equation solver	a/c	Richard Schmidt	6,10,12	Free
Dart3a	Darts scoring system	a/c	Patrick Wildenborg		£6
Fit4Life	Health and Fitness	a/c/s	Steve Litchfield	9	Free
Flying Utilities	Pilots calculations	5	Chris Parker		Free
Geni	Family tree browser	a/c	Martin N Dunstan	10	£15
GolfCard	Golf database	a/c/s	M-P(Golf)Systems		£25
Graph3a	Graph plotter	a/c	Gareth Wild	12	£8
Grapher	Function plotter and equation solver	5	Jamie Shotton		Free
KallCost	Phone call timer	3/a/c	Widget Software		£20
Kgene	Genealogy package	a/c	Kevin Groves		Free
Lotto5	Lottery Manager	5	Mian Gardner		£5

Name	Description	Runs on	Author	Issue	Price
Lottery 1.0	Lottery Program	s	Tom McGaw		Free
Lotto3a	Lottery graphical analyser	a/c	Patrick Bell	6	£12
Luach	Jewish Calendar	a/c/s	Aron Landy		£10
MemoVoc	Voice memo manager	a/c	David Joyce	6,9	£20
M5 Logger	Mileage logger	5	Mark Riley	15	Free
MedMate	Medic's assistant, calculations etc.	a/c	David Henshaw		£15
My Car	Fuel Consumption	a/c/5	Ad Bosch	11	Free
Notepad (Deluxe)	Notepad / project utilities	a/c	Purple Software	5-7,10,15	£60
Personal Wine Manager	Organizes your wine collection and wine notes	5	Marc de Oliveira		£10
PocDoc	Medical aids for personal use	a/c	Berthold Daum	4	??
PUR	PowerUp Memos	a/c	Brendan W. Breede		$20
QCD-Read	Quick-CAD graphics file viewer	a/c/s	Kevin Millican		Free
Reader	Text reader	a/c/s	Barry Childress	4,7,8,12	$30
RUS	Really Useful Stopwatch	a/c	Kevin Millican	15	£5
Saikan	A Japanese character (kanji) dictionary	a/c	Jamie Packer		Free
Shoplist	Shopping List assistant	a/c	Hugh Matthews	8,9	£10
Statistics	Stats and other calculations	5	Peter Csutora		$15
S3A Collect	Book/video collection Manager	a/c/s	Alan Richey		$10
Sound Master	Digital sound effects utilities	a/c/5	Palmtop BV	3,16	£25
TimeVoc	Speaking the time in the night	a/c	David Joyce		$15
Topix	Outliner	a/c	Uwe Kallemeyer		??
Ultimate Siena	Lottery and Cheque programs	s	Tom McGaw		Free
VReader5	Compressed Text reader	5	Jean-Luc Damnet		Free
WardRound	Doctor's assistant	a/c	Shane McKee		£15
Weight and Balance	Aviation utility	a/c	Graham Taylor		£15
Music-related applications					
Chord	Guitarist's chordbook	a/c	Graham Brand		£10
Music Box	Tuner/metronome/piano and other tools	a/c	John Neale		£10
Piano	Playable piano and metronome	5	Steve Litchfield		Free
Piano Helper	Tuner/metronome/piano and other tools	a/c	Tim Kerber		$10
'Power On' utilities					
Inteliscrn	Backlight and contrast controller	5	Gareth Alldread		Free
JB Jump	Jumps to any given application on power-on	a/c	John Boyce		Free
Pason	Control of password on startup	a/c	Andrew Lord		Free
PsiOn	Password utility	a/c/s	Paul Hargreaves		£6
Mapping/Navigation					
AutoRoute Express	Route planning	a/c	Psion plc	4,5,14	£65
Route Planner (En Route)	Route planning for Europe or USA	a/c/5	Palmtop BV	14	various
GeoDis	General mapping	a/c	Rolf Aeschbacher	14	£15
Geographical Database	UK Road Atlas	a/c	Keith Hollis	14	£34
Globecs3	3D globe of the earth	a/c	Andras Cserhati		Free
GPS AutoRoute	GPS add-on for AutoRoute	a/c	Mike Rudin	14	Free
GPS Mapping	GPS reader	a/c	Simon Taylor		Free
MetroRFR	Paris railway routefinder	a/c	Hervé Gouraud	14	FFR150
Psi-Mapper/GB	Geographical Information System	a/c/s/5	Steve Litchfield	4,7-10,14	£14
Psi-Mapper/Ireland	Geographical Information System	a/c/5	Steve Litchfield	11,14	£9
Psi-Mapper/France	Geographical Information System	a/c	Steve Litchfield	11,14	£14
Psi-Mapper/London	Geographical Information System	a/c/5	Steve Litchfield	4,6,14	£14
Nicholson London Pages	London information	a/c	Mobile Software	9,14	£19.95
Navigator	Marine navigation system	a/c	Maritek		??

Name	Description	Runs on	Author	Issue	Price
Psigar	GPS utilities	a/c	Jonathan Duff	14	£10
Sierra	Pilot's flight planning system	a/c/5	NavTech		??
Subway	London Underground routefinder	a/c/s	Tat Tang	10,14	Free
Tube 3a	London Underground routefinder	a/c/s	Simon Webb	6,14	£31.90
W2	World Map	3/a/c/s	John McAleely	11	Free
Programmers' Tools					
AKA	OPL obfuscator and compactor	a/c/s	Ferret Information Systems		£20
CleanOPL	OPL code tidier	a/c	Marcel Uithoof	10	Free
OPP/OPPDBG	OPL preprocessor and debugger	a/c	Andy Clarkson	10	£10
SafeOPL	RevTran protector	a/c	Richard Smedley	15	Free
S5Event	OPL/32 example framework	5	Alan Richey		Free
SoundMaster	Sound manipulation tool	a/c/5	Palmtop BV	12,16	£40
Reference applications					
AA World Travel Comp.	Travel Information	3/a/c/s/5	On-Board Info Ltd		£30
Berlitz Interpreter	Multi language vocabulary aid	a/c	Psion		£35
Berlitz Phrasebook	Multi language phrasebook	a/c/5	Psion	15	£40
Collins dictionaries	Two-way hypertext language dictionaries	5	Palmtop BV	16	£40
Halliwell's Film/Video Gd.	Hypertext, searchable Halliwell's movie guide	5	Palmtop BV		??
LifeGuide	Bible-based guide to life	3/a/c/s	Steve Litchfield		Free
Procyon Light/X	Astronomy/Planetarium	a/c/5	Van Can/Sussenbach	14	Free/£20
Polaris	Astronomy / sky chart	a/c	Achay Doan		$15
The Bible	King James version text and analysis functions	5	Palmtop BV	16	£40
The Portable Chef	1000s of assorted recipes	5	Palmtop BV	16	£40
Trivia	Trivia and other handy information	5	Steve Litchfield	17	Free
UK Pocket Directory	'Yellow Pages'-style information	5	Steve Litchfield/Stefan Smith	15,16	£12
Wld citizen Bus. Almanac	World information in hypertext form	a/c	On-Board-Info Ltd	11	£20

Missed you?

Have we missed any of your products from this listing? If so, then either send the details to the Editor (see contact details on page 1), or preferably use the special online update form on our World Wide Web site to submit or update your entry.

An introduction to SHAREWARE

On the pages of *Palmtop*, you'll read a lot about shareware. **Shareware represents a goldmine of programs and files, and there is a huge amount of material available for all of the Psion machines from the humble Series 3 Classic to the Series 5 and Geofox One. Most users will have heard of shareware, but not everyone has taken the plunge into the vast archives. In an effort to make Shareware more accessible, here is a quick guide to what's available, and how to get it.**

What is shareware?

Written by professional programmers and enthusiasts to meet specific (and sometimes unusual) needs, shareware is sometimes supplied for use on a thirty day trial basis. If you like the software you are then asked to send a payment to the author. Some programs are *freeware* and don't require any payment at all. Each program comes complete with information about how to install and use it, and how to pay for it.

Where do I get it?

- From the new *Palmtop* CD-ROM. This contains almost every item of Psion-related shareware (and freeware) ever produced, and avoids the trouble and expense of downloading from the Internet. See page 107 for further details of how to obtain this.
- Via a modem. This is another good option, as you have access to a range of other services too. With a modem connected to your telephone line you can 'download' software to your desktop computer or direct onto your Psion machine. Where possible, look for a 33K (or higher) modem. If you're new to the Internet, your best bet might be to connect via an Online Service such as *CompuServe*, *AOL* or *CiX* (in the UK) to get a feel for the way we communicate electronically. Many computer magazine cover disks contain the software you need. Connection via an *Internet Service Provider* (ISP) brings a more direct connection, but can be difficult to set up. If you are a novice, UK Online are quite Psion-friendly, and are recommended.
- From the *3-lib* shareware library. Shareware is supplied on 3.5" PC disc or CD-ROM, or copied direct onto an SSD or CF disk. See the advertisement section for details.
- From a commercial CD-ROM. Available from leading Psion dealers, these discs contain many useful programs and utilities, but are often somewhat out of date, and cost much more than the *Palmtop* CD-ROM, which is always far more up-to-date and exhaustive.

How do I use it?

You'll be able to obtain a list of the files that are available from any of the above sources.

Once you've found the file you want, there are four steps to take:

1. **Obtain the files.** See above.

2. **Decompress the files.** If you're new to computers then you may not be familiar with compression. Psion applications normally have more than one component (e.g. the program itself, help files and pictures). These are normally compressed into one file, which makes them easier to distribute. Shareware is most commonly compressed in 'Zip' format, and you can recognise these by the '.ZIP' at the end of the filename. Before you can install and run the program, you need to extract these files with an 'unzip' program. These 'Unzippers' are freely available from your shareware supplier. If you use DOS, look for *PKZIP*, Windows 3.1/95 users can use *Winzip*, and Mac users should try *Zipit* or the commercial *Stuffit Deluxe*. You can unzip files on your Psion without using another computer, using either *PsiZip* (Series 3a/3c, Siena and Series 5) or *S5Zip* for the Series 5.

3. **Copy the files.** You'll probably now need to transfer the unzipped files onto your Psion. To do this you'll need some external hardware, such as:

- Serial Lead (Docking cable/*3Link*). Connect your Psion to a desktop machine or a modem.

- Cyclone drive. Connect a 3.5" floppy disc drive to your 3a, 3c or Siena.

  Normally, one of the unzipped software files is a text file (e.g. README.TXT), which explains how the program should be installed and where the files need to be copied to on your Psion. Most Series 3/3a/3c and Siena software comes in the form of an 'application' file, and this .OPA or .APP file needs to be placed in an \APP\ directory.

  On a Series 5 (or Geofox One), the files normally reside in a named folder inside the \SYSTEM\APPS folder. Some of the larger programs come with an installer, and you will find a file, SETUP.EXE, which can be run from your PC, or choose 'Install new program' if you are using PsiWin 2.1 or later, or choose 'Install' under the 'PsiTools' section or PsiMac or MacConnect. These will connect to your Psion and copy the files into the correct locations automatically.

  See 'The Installation Game' under 'Further reading' for a more comprehensive discussion of the above procedures.

4. **Install the application.** From your 3/3a/3c or Siena system screen, select <Psion><I>. If the program was copied correctly, the filename should appear in the list. Select it, press <Enter>, and your program should be installed and ready to run. Series 5 users don't need to do this, as they will find that the newly installed program will automatically appear on the Extras bar.

Now that the program is installed, try it out. If the program is not to your liking, you can look around for another product. Most shareware authors have email addresses, are open to suggestions for improvement, and may appreciate a message on how useful their program is. Remember that if you find the program useful, you should honour any payment requests. Many software authors place 'nag' screens in their programs as a gentle reminder that a payment is due.

If there are any aspects of shareware that you think need more coverage, we'd like to hear from you. Please send your comments and suggestions to me, care of Palmtop.

Pete Sipple

petesipple@aol.com

Further reading

Shareware - What, Where & How - Page 43, Issue 6

Connecting your Series 3 - p41, Issue 5

Going on-line - p40, Issue 1

CD ROM - p20, Issue 7 ; p19, Issue 4

Cyclone - p14, Issue 7; p34, issue 15

PsiZip — p28, Issue 12

The Installation Game - p43 issue 14 and p53 issue 15

How to connect your Psion to the Internet - p71 issue 16

Obtaining the Palmtop CD

The *Palmtop* CD-ROM is now given FREE with all new subscriptions and resubscriptions received.

If you wish to obtain the CD before your resubscription is due then you can either resubscribe early, or obtain it from the 3Lib shareware library (see page 117 for details).

Using the Palmtop CD

Windows users who receive the CD should double-click on the file 'Start.htm'. On most PCs the web browser will leap into life and display the CD interface. If nothing happens, or if Windows asks how the file should be displayed, cancel the operation and install Microsoft Internet Explorer 3 from the CD. Both 16 and 32-bit versions can be found in the 'msie' folder. After installation, try double-clicking on 'Start.htm' again.

DOS, Amiga and Archimedes owners will be restricted in what they can view on the CD, but will still be able to browse the 3-Lib library section and copy off the software as needed.

Macintosh users should simply drag the 'start.htm' file onto their web browser, where it will load the interface just as on a PC. Those without a browser can simply load the free copy of Internet Explorer 4 from the 'msie' folder. Please note that the Psion screen saver, demos and emulators are all designed to run on PCs, so they will not work directly on your Mac.

PC users please note that your operating system may set all files retrieved from the CD to 'Read-only'. This shouldn't cause a problem for 99% of applications, but you may have to manually change file properties (use <Control><P> on the Series 5 itself) if you have problems with running or deinstalling software.

!! Special prices on Compact Flash prices for all *Palmtop* readers !!

Series 5 now shipping
(yes—we DO have stock)

NEW lower price on Series 5

Receive faxes on your 3a/3c
—with SIU-FAX

For 3a, 3c & Workabout: MC BOX 3
takes 2 x PCMCIA type II, SRAM or flash, built-in Centronics & RS232 ports

COVERTEC

Full range of Covertec™ cases now available for Series 5/3c/3a

Series 3a/3c from £19.00
Series 5 : £22.00

Ring for details

Series 5 memory up to 32MB - ring for special offers!

We ship worldwide!

All prices exclude VAT and carriage

Please mention *Palmtop* when replying to advertisements

The Ericsson GS18 data phone with built-in modem enables you to send and receive e-mail and faxes from your Series 3, Series 5 or laptop computer using only a single cable

GPS II

Ring us now for GPS prices, including full integration with your Psion, and copies of Psi-Mapper GB or Psi-Mapper France at reduced registration prices

Contact us now for best prices and service on accessories, books, connectors and cables, software, GPS, Covertec cases, Ericsson accessories, Psion 3c and Series 5, Simple and Sandisk Compact Flash, Digital cameras, Toshiba Libretto, HP colour palmtops and a whole lot more!

PSION

VISA

MasterCard

Exportech, P.O. Box 4499, London SW17 8XQ, England
Tel: 0181 682 3313 Fax: 0181 682 4414
E-mail: exportech@compuserve.com
http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/exportech

EXPORTECH

Please mention *Palmtop* when replying to advertisements

32MB CompactFlash Cards

ONLY £230 each to *Palmtop* readers!

Want to increase your memory?

Suitable for Psion Series 5s, HPs and digital cameras

We are the exclusive UK and European distributor for Shore Systems, California's leading solid-state solution provider. These cards are manufactured by Viking Components, Inc. who are at the forefront of memory component development in the USA. All cards are tested before despatch, and Viking Components warrantees your card free of defects for 5 years.

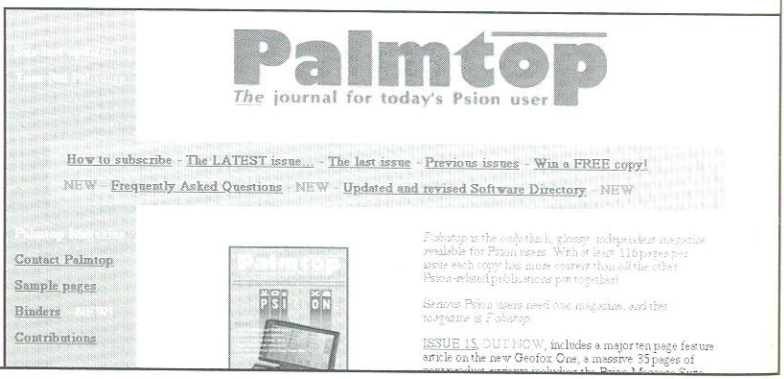
Please contact: Y. Newgas, 4 Lamorna Close, Radlett, Herts WD7 7DR

or e-mail: cf@cnewgas.cix.co.uk **Tel/Fax: 01923 469461**

(+P&P if outside UK)
Cash and cheques only at this price

http://www.palmtop.co.uk/

Our WWW site has now been moved to a fast new server location, kindly provided to us by UK Online.


Palmtop
The journal for today's Psion user
How to subscribe - The LATEST issue... - The last issue - Previous issues - Win a FREE copy!
NEW - Frequently Asked Questions - NEW - Updated and revised Software Directory - NEW
Contact Palmtop
Sample pages
Binders
Contributions
ISSUE 15 OUT NOW, includes a major ten page feature article on the new Geofox One, a massive 35 pages of

Series 5 in-car power cord *Series 5 in-car power cord*

Allgon Lovelock
27 Manor Road
Didcot
Oxon OX11 7JZ
tel: 01235 811119
fax: 01235 818081

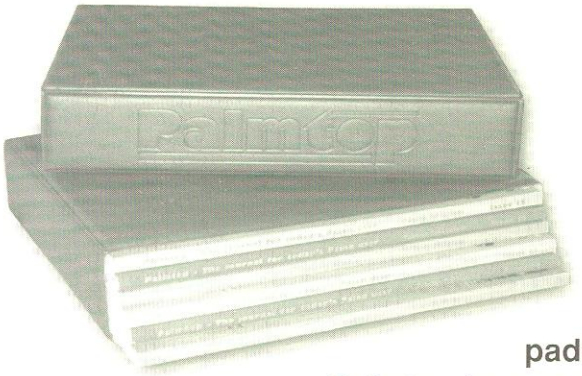
This simple, safe, curly-cord cigar lighter powered device is suitable for all 12 volt operated vehicles and conforms to EMC regulations

only £29.95 excluding VAT and P&P
(17.5% and £2.95 respectively in UK)

Power in your car!

Please mention *Palmtop* when replying to advertisements

Keep 'em smart!



Keep your issues of Palmtop clean and smart inside these attractive slip cases. Each case will hold SIX issues of the magazine, and is produced in two-tone padded grey vinyl with the Palmtop logo embossed into the spine.

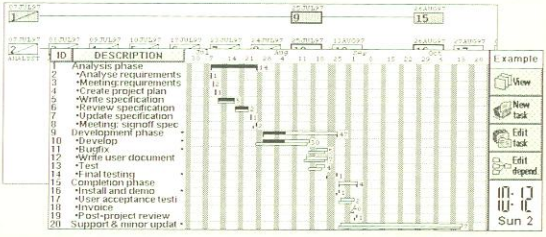
only £5 each in the UK, £6 elsewhere (all prices include VAT and postage)

PLAN

PLAN5

Shareware: £15/$25

screenshot taken from Plan5 running on a Series 5



Project Planning for 3a/3c & Siena, Series 5 & Geofox-One

- Update project plans, anywhere, anytime
- Enter tasks, dependencies and resource details
- Gantt & Pert charts
- Calculates end dates
- Track progress
- Interface to MS Project

Plan

Plan, Plan5 & the OPP SDK are available as shareware from my www homepage, or by sending a 3.5" disk. When registering please state which machine you have.
Andy Clarkson, 23 Worcester Avenue, Hardwick, Cambridgeshire. CB3 7XG. UK.
Telephone: +44 (0)1954 210899 email: andyc@csi.com
www: http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/andyc/

OPP SDK 1.0 (advanced OPL development for 3a/3c/Siena, £10/$20):

OPP - Extends the OPL language ('C' style preprocessor, 'C' style structures, multi-dimensional arrays...) — Psion & PC versions (can be used for OPL development on a PC)

OPPDBG - Runtime source level debugger for OPL programs

Please mention *Palmtop* when replying to advertisements

PsionEx

Second User Exchange Service

Mail Order
Voice mail: 01522 811707 (Replies within 24Hrs)
Email: PsionEx@toad-hal.demon.co.uk

HARDWARE		We Buy	We Sell
Siena	512K	£40	£80
	1MB	£50	£100
Series 3a	512K	£60	£120
	1MB	£75	£150
	2MB	£90	£180
Series 3c	1MB	£90	£150
	2MB	£105	£190
	backlit/2MB	£110	£200
Series 5	4MB	£210	£320
	8MB	£240	£370

COMMS		We Buy	We Sell
Serial Cable	3a	£15	£35
PsiWin+cables	3a	£25	£50
	Siena/3c	£30	£60
Printer link	3a	£7	£18
	Siena/3c	£10	£27
3Fax	3a	£20	£50
PsiFax s/w	disk	£15	£35
PsiMail Internet	disk	£20	£40
PC card modem ad.	3a	£30	£75

MISC		We Buy	We Sell
AC adaptor	3a	£3	£10
Leather Case		£2	£5
Programming Manual		£1	£6
Cyclone External Floppy		£50	£100

MEMORY		We Buy	We Sell
Flash SSD	256K	£10	£25
	512K	£18	£40
	1MB	£30	£60
	2MB	£40	£80
	4MB	£60	£140
Ram SSD	512K	£30	£65
	1MB	£55	£125
	2MB	£80	£160

SOFTWARE		We Buy	We Sell
Act! 1.0 (Symantec)	SSD	£20	£55
Autoroute Express	SSD	£15	£35
Backgammon	SSD	£10	£25
Berlitz Interpreter	SSD	£10	£25
Berlitz Phrasebook	SSD	£10	£25
Chess 3a	SSD	£10	£20
Data DeLuxe (v1.0)	SSD	£5	£18
Expense Tracker	disk	£10	£20
En Route	SSD	£15	£45
Games 1/2/3 (each)	SSD	£5	£15
Games 3a	SSD	£10	£25
Money	SSD	£5	£25
Monopoly	SSD	£10	£30
Paint & Compose	SSD	£10	£30
Personal Accounts	SSD	£10	£25
Scrabble	SSD	£15	£35
Toolkit 1/2	SSD	£15	£35
Other titles available...		£phone	£phone

Terms and conditions: All equipment supplied with 3 month guarantee. FREE carriage within UK for orders over £20. We only purchase items in full working order, without cosmetic damage. Buying prices apply to items with original boxes & manuals. Up to 20% discount may apply to equipment not meeting these standards. Prices correct at time of going to press. Offers subject to change without notice.

KallCost 3

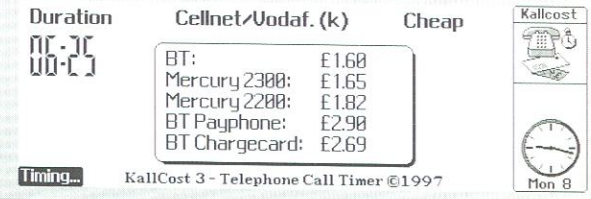
Stay in control!

Available as shareware, KallCost 3 for the Series 3a/3c allows you to stay in control of your telephone costs. Calculate the cost of international and mobile calls, keep a log of your calls and set warnings to keep your conversations short. Supplied with up-to-date tariff information and fully configurable.

For a fully working version of KallCost 3, plus copies of other programs for the 3a/3c, Siena and Series 5, send 3.5" disk together with a stamped addressed envelope to: Pete Sipple, Top Floor, 17 Devereux Road, Southend-on-Sea SS1 1DR

Available from http://members.aol.com/petesipple/kallcost.htm & usual shareware sources. Email psipple@cix.co.uk for full details

- Time telephone calls
- Calculate call charges
- Compare telephone tariffs
- Control mobile phone bills
- Log your expenditure
- Small and easy-to-use



Please mention *Palmtop* when replying to advertisements

So...

...what do you expect from your Internet provider?

Mac, Acorn, Amiga, Psion and PC support?

Unlimited free personal web space?

100% local call access?

ISDN at no extra cost?

24 hour helpdesk?

Parental controls?

Flat rate fees?

it's all part of the service at

UK Online

All this and more comes with a UK Online account. With no setup charges and subscriptions from just £9.99 per month (*including* VAT), UK Online is the perfect Internet provider for the home user or small business.

Call us today for a month's free trial. There's no obligation and we won't even ask for a credit card number.

01749 333333

sales@ukonline.co.uk

http://www.ukonline.co.uk

UK Online is part of Easynet Group plc

Palmscape - Notice the difference

palm scape

Quality shareware in the palm of your hand

Concept
Planning & mind mapping assistant

HtmlEdit
Full HTML editing on your palmtop!

Encrypt-it!
High security file encryption system

Backlite+
All in one system control, sticky notes & macro system

Desktop Utilities Plus
10 useful day-to-day utilities in one user-friendly shell

Photo5
The graphics and image processing suite

Yartsie
Series 5 version of the classic dice game

Easy Note
The Original 'Jotter' for the EPOC platform

The entire Palmscape range for the Series 5 / Geofox One is available for FREE download from the world wide web, or by sending a stamped addressed envelope to: Palmscape, 44 Harpur Street, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK40 2QU

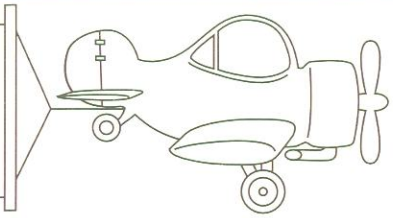
Telephone: 01234 440393

http://www.palmscape.com

email: sales@palmscape.com

Commercial quality. Shareware ideals.

Ben Vaughan
presents



Tile Trix
Shanghai
War
Casino Blackjack
Bio Base
Connect 4
Robo Dungeon
Light Cycles
LEM
Lights Off

To receive all these and more on a PC HD 3.5" disk, send £5 cash, cheque or postal order to:

B Vaughan
25 Upper Bevendean Avenue
Brighton
East Sussex BN2 4FG
England

Most titles available for 3a/3c/Siena and Series 5
Download from http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/B_Vaughan

POS Ltd

How can we help you?

Psion repairs and service by post or while-U-wait (please call first)

Upgrade the memory of your Series 3/3a/3c or Siena

Purchase a refurbished Series 3a

Data transfer from Series 3/3a/3c to the Series 5

Technical support and training

APPROVED PSION Service Centre

Tel: 0181 677 9246 Fax: 0181 769 9293

POSLTD@compuserve.com **www.interrreach.com/pos**

Pinnock Organiser Services Ltd, 143 Streatham High Road, London SW16 6EG

MasterCard

VISA

For more information on Psion supplies

Special offers only for Palmtop readers

Series 5 (8MB) £355 + VAT

Series 5 (4MB) £325 + VAT

Siena (1MB) £165 + VAT

call for a full pricelist and training guide

For more information call Unicorn Direct free

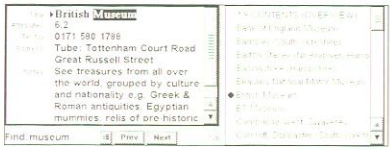
0800 980 9009

or 0181 450 1177

Unicorn Direct is a subsidiary of Unicorn Ventures Ltd.
International House, 16 Priestley Way, London NW2 7AP
Fax: +44 (0)181 450 1125

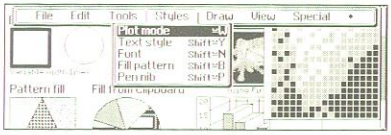
Please mention *Palmtop* when replying to advertisements

Steve Litchfield and 3-Lib are proud to present...

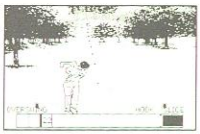

British Museum
6.2
0171 580 1788
Tube: Tottenham Court Road
Great Russell Street
See treasures from all over the world, grouped by culture and nationality e.g. Greek & Roman antiquities. Egyptian mummies, relis of pre-historic
Find: museum
Prev
Next

UK Pocket Directory - a huge up-to-date database of contact numbers and facts for everything to do with UK living. From travel to accommodation, from computers to antiques, they're all in here somewhere! 3300 entries, fully searchable. 100% fully working shareware for the Series 5.

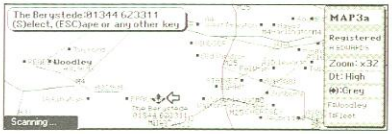
UK STD Codes - not just every standard telephone code in the UK, but mobile and special numbers too. 6000 entries. The ultimate guide to decoding telephone numbers! Freeware for the Series 5.



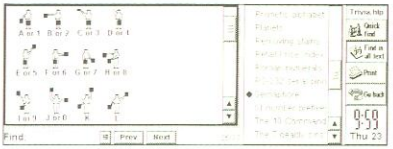
Draw - the world's best selling image editor and painting program. We've been privileged to have taken over support for Draw from the original developers. 100% fully working shareware for the Series 3a and 3c.



Fairway & Golf - versions of the famous 3-D golf simulation for Series 3a, 3c and Siena. Full tournament play with 20 computer (and one other human) players. Digital sound throughout. 100% fully working shareware.



Psi-Mapper - versions available for Siena, 3a, 3c and Series 5, and for Great Britain, Ireland, France and Greater London. Basic road maps, hundreds of overlays and masses of useful info. 100% fully working shareware.



Trivia - Huge database of facts, figures and titbits of information. Perfect for setting and answering quizzes. From Presidents to Paper Sizes, from Mountains to Morse Code and from Shakespeare to the Seven Ages of Man. Freeware for the Series 5.

(UK Pocket Directory and STD Codes are compiled in association with Stefan Smith)

All the software above (and much more) is downloadable from the Internet at 3lib.ukonline.co.uk or available on the 3-Lib/Palmtop CD-Rom. This is £13 including worldwide postage or free with new subscriptions /resubscriptions to Palmtop magazine. Contact 3-Lib on 0118 9265081, or send your payment to 3-Lib, 22 Grays Crescent, Woodley, Reading, RG5 3EN, United Kingdom

RMR Software

*Shareware for the **Psion Series 5***
Geofox One
Series 3a/3c
*& **Siena***

Personal Accounts Suite
The No.1 best selling Psion shareware program!
S5 Geofox S3a/c S3 Siena Registration : **£20 (US$30)**

Extended ToDo Manager
S5 Geofox S3a/c
Registration : **£10 (US$15)**

Utilities & Conversions
S5 Geofox
Registration : **£7 (US$10)**

Note Taker / Jotter
S5 Geofox
Registration : **£7 (US$10)**

Compression / Archive Program
S5 Geofox
Registration : **£15 (US$25)**

Home Inventory
S5 Geofox S3a/c Siena
Registration : **£7 (US$10)**

Fuel Consumption Monitor
S5 Geofox S3a/c Siena
Registration : **£7 (US$10)**

Investment Performance Monitor ***S3a/c Siena***
Registration : **£7 (US$10)**

Collection Manager
S3a/c Siena
Registration : **£7 (US$10)**

Expense Account Monitor
S3a/c Siena
Registration : **£10 (US$15)**

Picture / Icon Editor
S3a/c Siena
Registration : **£10 (US$15)**

http://www.rmrsoft.com/

Email : sales@rmrsoft.com

Free copies of all programs are available for download from the above webpage, or send a 3.5" disc & stamped addressed envelope (specifying the platform required) to either:

RMR Software
c/o 6000 Natick Court
Burke, VA 22015
USA

RMR

RMR Software
c/o 46 Mortimer Road
Kempston
Bedford MK42 8RE
England

PSION

training courses

If you're a beginner...

we'll show you how to get the best performance from your Psion.

Both courses will take you through the main built-in applications and show you how to use them effectively on a day-to-day basis.

Courses are held every **Friday, 9.30 till 4.30** at the Psion UK headquarters in Mayfair, London.

The cost per session is £100- which includes complimentary refreshments, course materials and a comprehensive training guide to take away.

For more information, or to book your place on the course, contact:
Psion Customer services on 0990 143 050
or write to Rob Edwards,
Training Manager,
Psion UK, 1 Red Place,
London, W1Y 3RE.
quoting ref: 'Palmtop'

on

SERIES 3c

SERIES 5

Please mention *Palmtop* when replying to advertisements

Next issue...

Planned for issue 18:

- Exciting news on some important new Psion hardware...
- Maximise your memory. We look at how to keep your Series 3a/3c, Siena or Series 5 in tip-top shape
- A roundup of Series 5 macro systems and interface enhancement programs
- Working with embedded objects
- Connecting a 3a/3c/Series 5 to a GPS unit
- Using DATA to maintain a catalogue of your collections (CDs, videos, stamps—anything!)
- The continuation of our Series 3a/3c and Series 5 Psion-to-Internet connection guide
- The start of a brand new competition—WIN a free 32MB CF or 4MB SSD every issue!
- Plus all the usual news, reviews, features and more...

Due out early/mid June...

At last a book providing a complete guide to software development for the whole Psion palmtop range, including Series 5

Anyone interested or involved in programming Psion computers will benefit from this 600+ page book and the free CD-ROM. Together they form a huge collection of program code examples, complete applications, advice on techniques, file format details, utilities and numerous other resources.

Comprehensive coverage of:

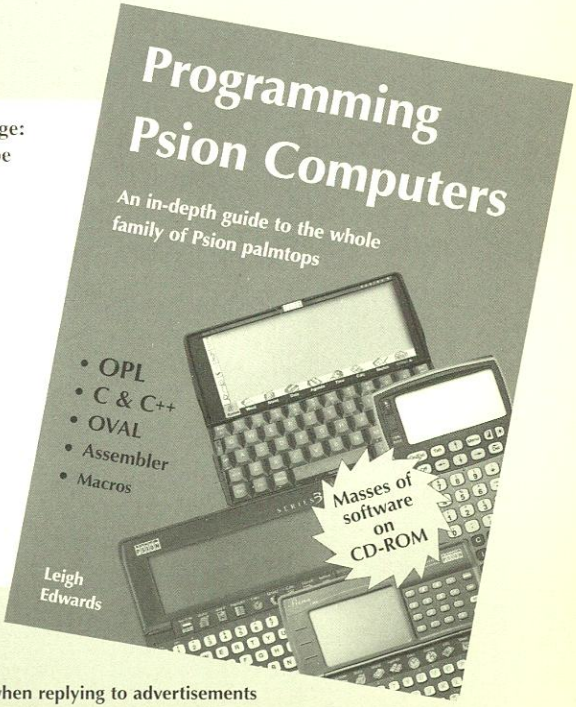
- **OPL, Oval, C, C++, Macros and Assembler**
- **All SDKs, utilities and additional SDKs, e.g. for Database, Comms, SMS, etc.**
- **Professional techniques. e.g. Sound, Help, Multi-lingual support, Icons, Graphics, Database and Comms, etc.**
- **Combining OPL with EPOC system calls and C routines**

All program snippets, source code examples and information files are described and catalogued

"Overall, Programming Psion Computers is just what serious programmers have been waiting for..."

"...With the free CD-ROM it's excellent value for money and a must-have for the Psion programmer."

Above quoted from a review in issue 15 of Palmtop magazine



Price £29.95, including CD ROM, plus postage:
£3.50 UK, £4.50 Europe, £8.50 outside Europe

All major credit cards accepted

Tel: +44 (0)1606 861027
Fax: +44 (0)1606 861032

E-mail: info@emcc.cix.co.uk
or 100533.1726@compuserve.com

http://www.compulink.co.uk/~emcc/

EMCC, 23 Summerfield Drive, Moulton,
Northwich, Cheshire
CW9 8PU, UK

EMCC

welcome to mobile computing

GEOFOX one

Mobile email – Web browsing – PC connectivity
The handheld computer with the largest, clearest display in the industry

GEOFOX

www.geofox.com

Tel +44 1787 371371 UK 0845 8440109